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this issue:
rock and fantasy meet in
INFINITY
featuring the art of
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JON MUTH
and
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also:
THE LAST
GALACTUS STORY

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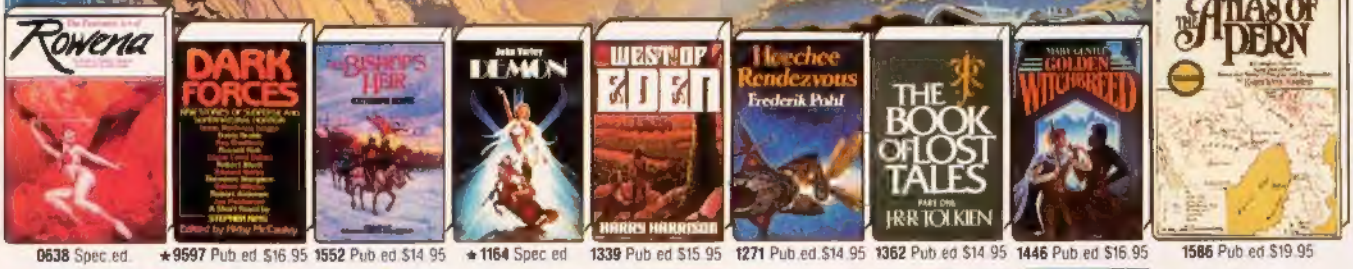

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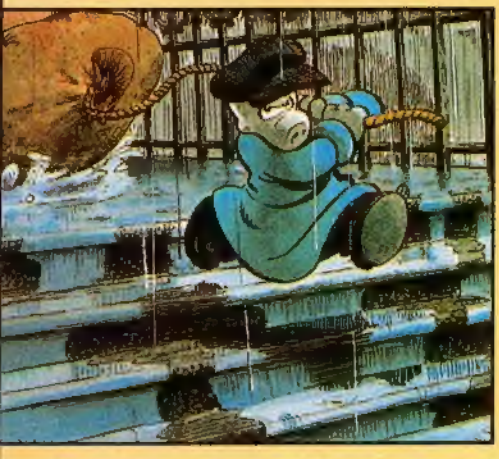

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OVERVIEW

notes on stories & contributors

One of the fascinating things about doing **Epic Illustrated** is the interesting array of drop-in trade we get. Make no mistake, we only see people by appointment. But, this being a part of **Marvel Comics,** a number of folks, when they're doing business elsewhere on the floor, like to drop by and say hello, or else some of our regulars will make a delivery with another friend or acquaintance in tow. We've had chance meetings with Japanese or European cartoonists whose work we've admired but whom we never quite thought we'd just bump into on our home turf. We've discovered some science-fiction authors whose writing we're gaga over have in turn been fans of things we've done. And we've had artists drift in whom we've been intending to peg to do something for us and never quite managed to corner them at the right time. This issue's cover sort of came about that way. **Berni Wrightson** kind of drifted in with some of our pre-Christmas traffic and, as we hadn't gotten anything out of him in a while, we rather routinely asked (since we knew he was up to his inkwell in a graphic novel or two) if he ever got free, maybe he could do a cover for us. Well, it turned out Berni already had something going that he was working on just for fun. And what he began outlining to us, was the project that is covered in the article that ties in with his cover. So, while it's good form to have appointments, it's sort of nice to have drop-in trade too.

THE SIGN

We seem to be on sort of a roll as far as running the artwork of **Kent Williams** is concerned. With another appearance slated for next issue, this mild-mannered young graduate of Pratt Institute may just set some kind of record for consecutive stories run without being part of a continuing series. Actually, this is a somewhat longer job than usual and particularly impressive to us for the way Kent managed to suggest Japanese screen painting styles in his approach to the layout and design of the piece as well as his use of watercolor. Kent had requested a story with a samurai setting and our resident expert, managing editor **Jo Duffy,** was quick to oblige him. For those of you more familiar with Jo from her editorial associations with us (she handles **Dreadstar, Groo, Dreadstar and Company, Swords of the Swashbucklers,** and our up-and-coming **Elfquest** and **Black Dragon** titles as well as her work on **Epic**), you should check out her writing on the Marvel **Star Wars** comic or make a comic book store owner happy and buy some back issues of **Powerman & Iron Fist** that she wrote. In an age of a great number of dreadfully serious comics, Jo is one of the few writers who consistently balances straightforward adventure with humor. That said, **The Sign** is a more sober story but one that brings a fresh approach to sword-and-sorcery.

UNICORN AUTUMN

We mentioned drop-in trade and appointments earlier. **Alix Berenzy** came to us just the way you're supposed to do it. A recent graduate of the Philadelphia College of Art, she phoned us several days in advance of making her trip into New York and made an appointment to show her portfolio. The thing we most often find in looking at portfolios is that most people aren't ready yet. The thing we found in looking at Alix's portfolio is that she was. The hitch was that her style didn't really lend itself to comics, which is, with some embellishments, what we specialize in. But one of the neat things about **Epic** is that while *most* of it is comics, *all* of it doesn't have to be. Alix was game to try an illustrated story and, impressed by a

sample she had of a really great looking unicorn, we put together this one for her. **Unicorn Autumn,** like most of Alix's work, is done with white pencil on black paper. We asked her how she happened to hit upon this particular way of working. She said she got the idea when, during her art school days, her brother tried to talk her into doing paintings on the side of his van. Being a serious artist, she, of course, refused. But her brother's van was black, and the more she thought about working on a dark surface like that, the more she liked it. So far as we know, her brother's van is still undecorated, but Alix has a unique illustration technique that's kept her busy doing art for children's books. Currently she's engaged in writing and illustrating her own version of **The Frog Prince,** in which several publishers are already interested.

THE FIX

Back in our August 1982 issue, we ran a story by **Pepe Moreno**—who most of you will remember for his long-running series in these pages, **Generation Zero**—called **Survival.** It was a black-and-white story about a colonist's return to an earth long desolate and destroyed. When Pepe delivered the story to us, he mentioned it was based on another story he had done, in color, that had been taken as an unpaid inventory story for another magazine and apparently lost (some magazines don't pay for material until publication). **Survival** was a totally different story but utilized some xeroxed panels from the original color job. Eventually, after we had run **Survival,** the other story finally turned up. Pepe got it back from the other magazine. When we saw it, we were rather intrigued with both the similarities and the differences and how they combined to make two separate stories. We also, as always, were knocked out by Pepe's draftsmanship and incredible handling of the markers and dyes he works with for color. So, for those of you who have the issue with **Survival** in it, you may get a kick out of comparing it with **The Fix.** For those of you who don't, we think you'll find it a great-looking and gruesomely sardonic little tale.

JOURNEY TO OUTER-EARTH

We don't know if it's the continually good weather in San Diego where he makes his home, but **Rick Geary** remains one of the most unique and unpigeonholeable cartoon-illustrators around. He does advertising art, he does underground cartoons, and he does delightful fantasies like this one that can kind of make you smile and feel a little sad at the same time for the characters he portrays. Whatever the secret, we hope Rick staunchly stays untypecast and keeps on favoring us with these little gems every now and again.

CEREBUS: SELLING INSURANCE & THE GIRL NEXT DOOR

Speaking of little gems, readers have been responding so well to the adventures of everyone's favorite aardvark when he was a little boy, we've decided to run *two* of them this time. For those of you who aren't frequenters of comics shops, **Cerebus** is the creation of **Dave Sim** and a monthly black-and-white comic from his **Aardvark-Vanaheim** publications. Cerebus's specialty is drinking, playing cards, and, currently, being Pope. Dave's specialty is satirizing everything from barbarians to parliamentary procedure. Dave wrote, penciled, and inked the figures herein. His co-worker, **Gerhard,** did the elaborate rendering and really exquisite color; his reward for this is that Dave has a campaign underway to provide him with a first and/or last name.

—**Archie Goodwin**

NEXT ISSUE

THE SEED AND THE SOWER by JON J MUTH and KENT WILLIAMS

plus BEYOND LEGEND by VICTOR DE LA FUENTE and ARCHIE GOODWIN

also KEN MACKLIN LELA DOWLING MARC HEMPEL PATY COCKRUM

cover by JOHN BOLTON

FEEDBACK

letters & comments

Dear Stan and Archie,

Although I've been picking up **Epic Illustrated** since the first issue I can honestly say that I have not enjoyed an entire issue as much as the one I have just put down, (#28). I do wish you would start putting the issue number on the front cover.

Everything about the book made it stand out above and beyond the past ones. The collection of talent definitely had a lot to do with my feelings.

I must admit, though, that the Cerebus story is by far and away my favorite. I have just not seen enough of it in mainstream comics. Sure there's **Groo, Blue Devil, Cerebus** and more, but good humor is very hard to find. (Please, no ice cream jokes.) Even the regular **Cerebus** title itself has alienated me to a degree with its constantly ongoing political episodes. Too much is too much.

But I digress.

Training Cycle also struck me as something both thought provoking, science-fictionish and humorous in a strange sort of way. I think the artwork stands on its own as a very strong storytelling device, making any words totally unnecessary. This in itself is high praise indeed. A mood was set. A story told. All with just one word spoken. I applaud **Steve Sabella.**

I realize I have not commented on everything in the issue. Needless to say, if I did so this letter would be at least three times its current size.

Does **Mark Bodé** plan on doing anything with any of his father's other characters?

Let me go before I ramble on any more. If you have not noticed by now, I thoroughly enjoyed this issue. Keep up the good work.

Johnny Loumax
Jersey City, NJ

So far as we know, *Johnny,* at present *Mark Bodé* has made no firm plans to continue any more of the works begun by his late father. He has mentioned that certain of the characters were fully realized and finished during *Vaughn's* lifetime, or too personal to their creator for another cartoonist to even successfully carry on. However, it may be, that after completing this segment of *Cobalt 60, Mark* may choose to do another new serial about the character with writer *Larry Todd.* Or he may pick up on another of *Vaughn's* old stories. Or he may fool us all, and come up with something else entirely.

Dear Stan and Archie,

As a collector from the start. I really enjoyed the February issue.

I especially liked the cover. If we had evolved that way they would clip our tails at birth instead of circumcising us.

Until next issue.

Steve Davis
Michigan City, IN

Nonsense. We don't know about you, *Steve,* but we think nice, long tails are lovely, and ought not to be mutilated.

Dear Stan and Archie,

I have been with **Epic** every step of the way. A pattern is emerging, generally the reproduction of the magazine is slick and attractive. But oft-times, the story is weak and obtuse. The staffers on **Epic** are supposed to be seasoned professionals.

One of the most glaring errors made by you, **Mr. Goodwin,** is to let a piece get by which has too much dialogue and not enough illustrations. **The Everlasting Tag** (February 1985) by **Rick Veitch** is a classic example. A successful comic book story has not one whit more dialogue than is necessary. **Veitch's** work is messy, it wounds the eye. As for story, it is junk.

Dragonslander does not bear out the allegation that its author, **Robert Rodi,** is a working pro. It bears a resemblance to many works that appear in high school newspapers.

Training Cycle is well drawn, but I don't get the point. I have read about **Cerebus** only in **Epic's** pages and while the drawing is good, **Cerebus** doesn't seem very likeable.

The Last Galactus Story, one hopes, lives up to its title's promise. **Galactus'** headgear reminds me of a garbage disposal.

The lettering in **Toadswart** detracts from the story. The storyline is clubfooted, heavy-handed, flea-brained, and dull.

The last three issues of **Epic** have started to slide. Crude language and weak stories have been the rule. No commanding figure of fiction has materialized out of the welter of the past issues.

Cobalt 60 is badly drawn, tedius, uninspired. **Larry Todd,** the writer of this wretched series, should study **Pogo Possum** cartoons to learn how to carry out satirical, social and political themes.

None of **Epic's** heroes are real enough to make the reader remember them. They have no personality. But of course, that is a fault of all mainstream comics, especially **Marvel Comics.** In your graphic novels, all you are doing is contriving endless clones of Superman, Spider-man, Conan, and the Hulk.

Mike Grogan,
Arkadelphia, AR

Dear Stan and Archie,

I've been reading **Epic** since the early issues (about issue #14) and have never seen or read something that impressed me enough to write to you about.

I enjoyed issue #28 very much, but especially liked **The Atlanta Fantasy Fair Portfolio.** I always like seeing the labors of new artists as well as the old pros. After looking through the ten illustrations you chose from the hundred and fifty, I was left wanting to see more. I would like to see more collections of amateur art as well as the portfolios you have been printing in past issues. I found **Cliff Sister** by **Michael J. White** and **Alan A. Patton's** painting to be the best of the bunch. I also was impressed by **Ed Cherniga's** and **Lucille Staszak's** renderings.

If I had my way, I would have an extra issue published with nothing but pieces by new artists. Let's see what the new people have to offer the art world.

Eric Brooks
Castro Vy., CA

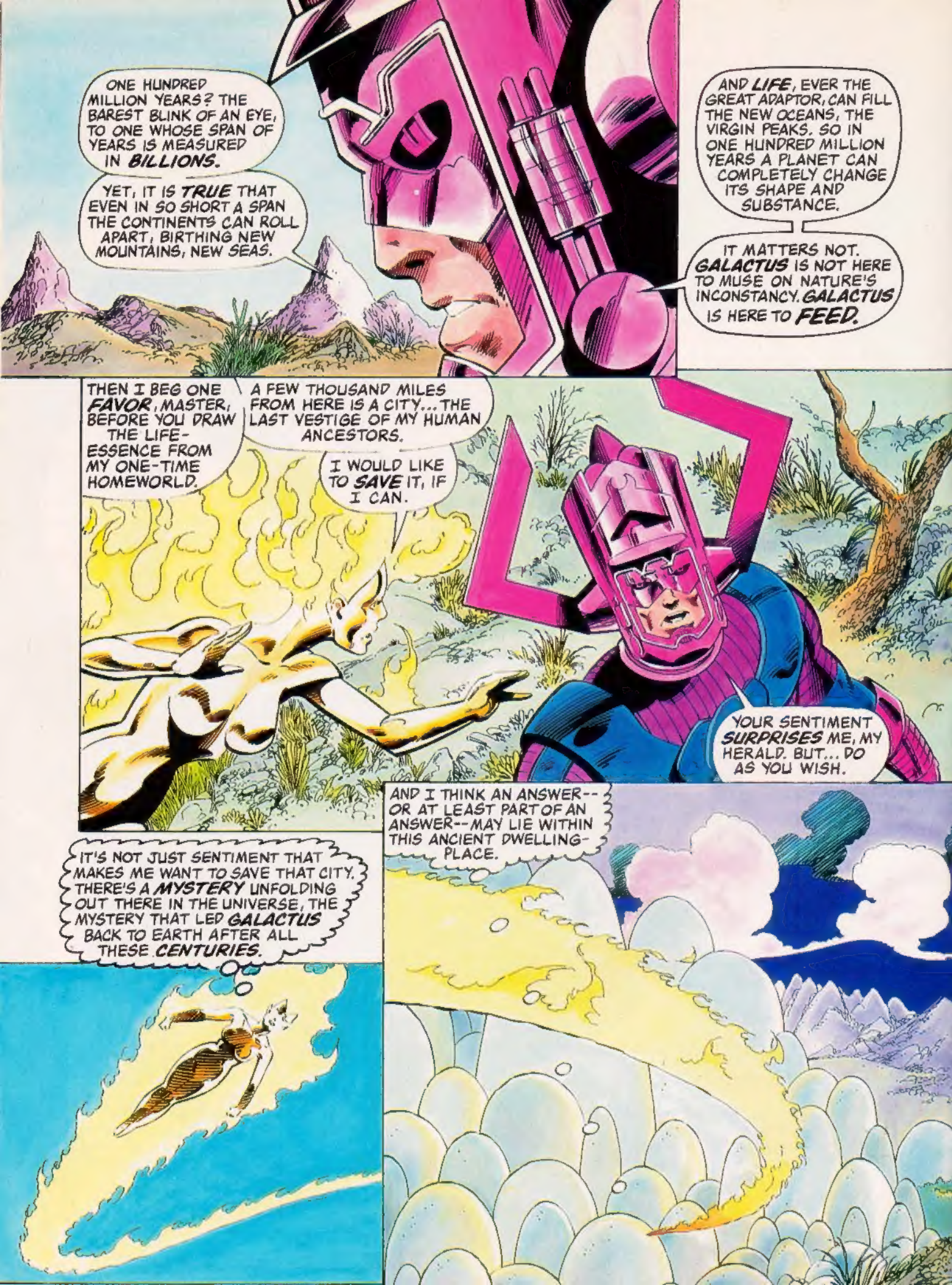
As a matter of fact, every time we print a first job by a talented creator, you're seeing what the new people have to offer, *Eric.* We had a lot of fun doing the Atlanta portfolio, though, so we certainly aren't ruling out the possibility of doing another amateurs portfolio.

(continues on page 66)

THE LAST GALACTUS STORY

CHAPTER FIVE: THE END OF THE EARTH

THIS, THEN, IS THE PLANET OF YOUR BIRTH, NOVA? IT HAS CHANGED *MUCH* SINCE *GALACTUS* LAST WALKED HERE.
THAT *WAS* ONE HUNDRED MILLION YEARS AGO, MASTER.

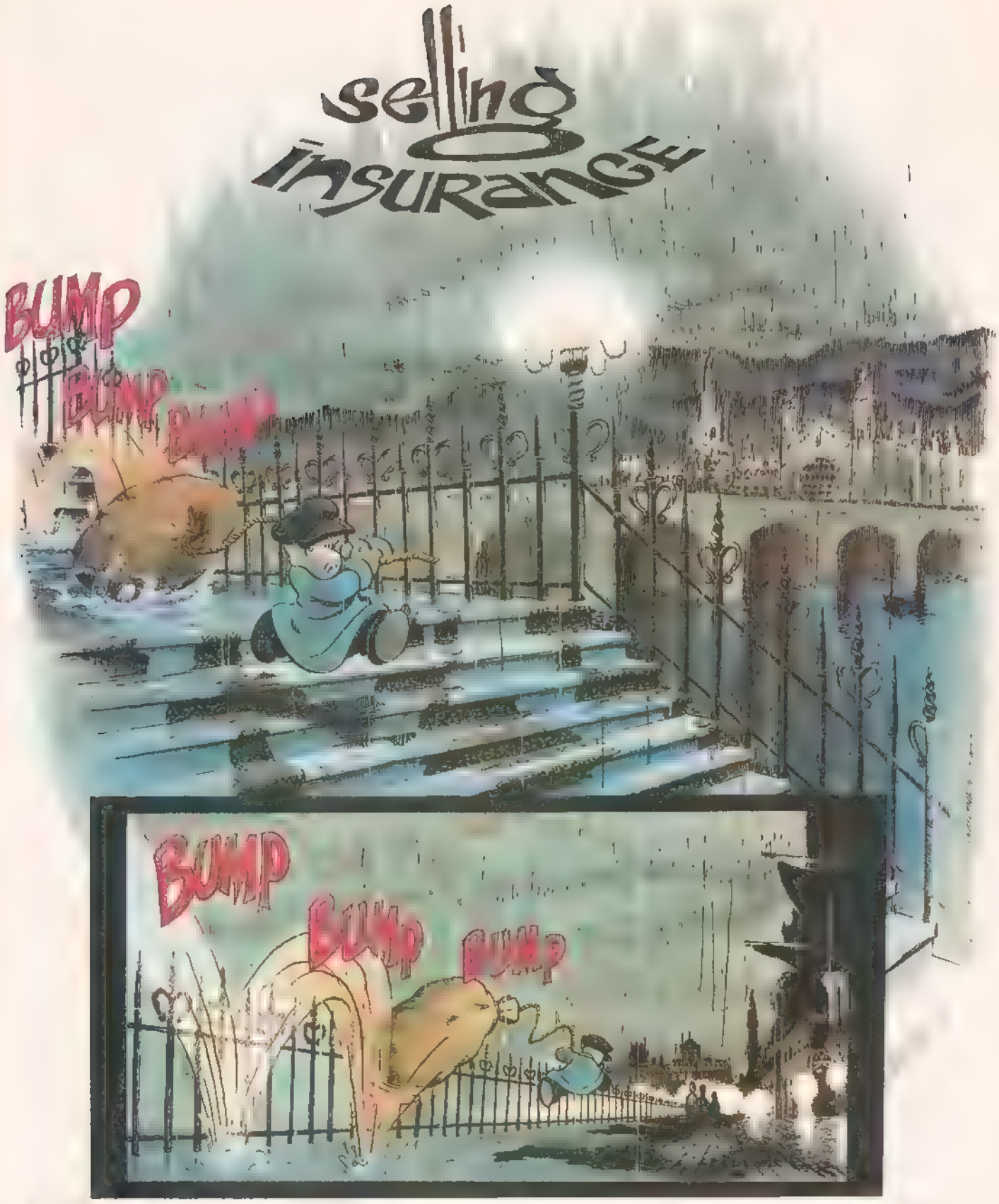

ONE HUNDRED MILLION YEARS? THE BAREST BLINK OF AN EYE, TO ONE WHOSE SPAN OF YEARS IS MEASURED IN BILLIONS.
YET, IT IS TRUE THAT EVEN IN SO SHORT A SPAN THE CONTINENTS CAN ROLL APART, BIRTHING NEW MOUNTAINS, NEW SEAS.
AND LIFE, EVER THE GREAT ADAPTOR, CAN FILL THE NEW OCEANS, THE VIRGIN PEAKS. SO IN ONE HUNDRED MILLION YEARS A PLANET CAN COMPLETELY CHANGE ITS SHAPE AND SUBSTANCE.
IT MATTERS NOT. GALACTUS IS NOT HERE TO MUSE ON NATURE'S INCONSTANCY. GALACTUS IS HERE TO FEED.
THEN I BEG ONE FAVOR, MASTER, BEFORE YOU DRAW THE LIFE-ESSENCE FROM MY ONE-TIME HOMEWORLD.
A FEW THOUSAND MILES FROM HERE IS A CITY... THE LAST VESTIGE OF MY HUMAN ANCESTORS.
I WOULD LIKE TO SAVE IT, IF I CAN.
YOUR SENTIMENT SURPRISES ME, MY HERALD. BUT... DO AS YOU WISH.
IT'S NOT JUST SENTIMENT THAT MAKES ME WANT TO SAVE THAT CITY. THERE'S A MYSTERY UNFOLDING OUT THERE IN THE UNIVERSE, THE MYSTERY THAT LED GALACTUS BACK TO EARTH AFTER ALL THESE CENTURIES.
AND I THINK AN ANSWER--OR AT LEAST PART OF AN ANSWER--MAY LIE WITHIN THIS ANCIENT DWELLING-PLACE.

SHAKESPEARE! SHAKESPEARE! WHERE... OH, THERE YOU ARE.
AS CONSTANT AS THE ROCKY BROW THAT OVERHANGS...
NEVER MIND THAT NOW. FIND YOURSELF A SECURE PLACE AND BATTEN DOWN THE HATCHES.
THIS OLD PLANET IS ABOUT TO BECOME HISTORY, BUT IF I TIME IT RIGHT YOU AND THIS CITY WILL SURVIVE.
NOW GET INSIDE-- QUICKLY!
I GO, MY LADY.
MORE SWIFTLY THAN THE ARCHER'S SHAFT, WHICH FROM HIS MIGHTY BOW DOTH FLY ON WINGS OF...
ELSEWHERE...
LET IT NOW BEGIN!

AND FOR WHAT FOLLOWS...
...THERE CAN BE NO WORDS.

HANG ON, SHAKESPEARE!!

NOVA!
MASTER?
I HAVE CONSUMED THE LIFE-ESSENCE OF THE PLANET. IT WAS, AS I HAD LONG SUSPECTED THE RICHEST GEM IN THE UNIVERSE.
I AM REPLENISHED.
NOW WE MUST ACCEPT THE TASK THAT FATE HAS CLEARLY DEALT US.
WHAT TASK, MASTER?
THE TRAIL OF EXPLODED GALAXIES LEADS TO THIS LENS, AND NOT BEYOND.
WHATEVER SECRET LIES BEYOND THIS PROCESSION OF DESTRUCTION IT WILL BE FOUND THERE...
...AT THE CORE OF THE MILKY WAY!
THE LAST GALACTUS STORY CONTINUES NEXT ISSUE



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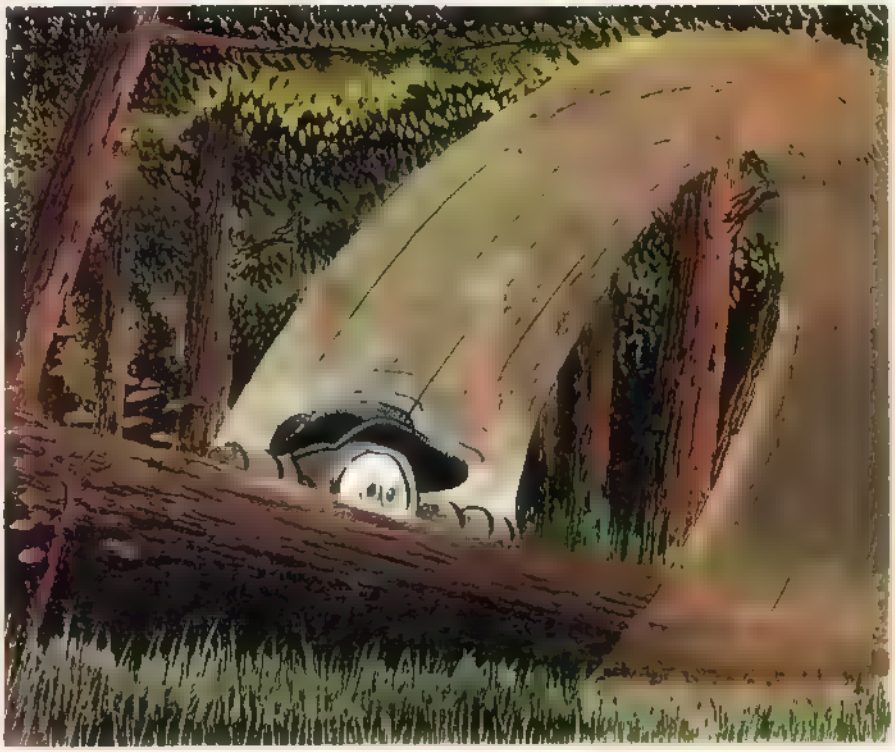
WHAM

the girl next door



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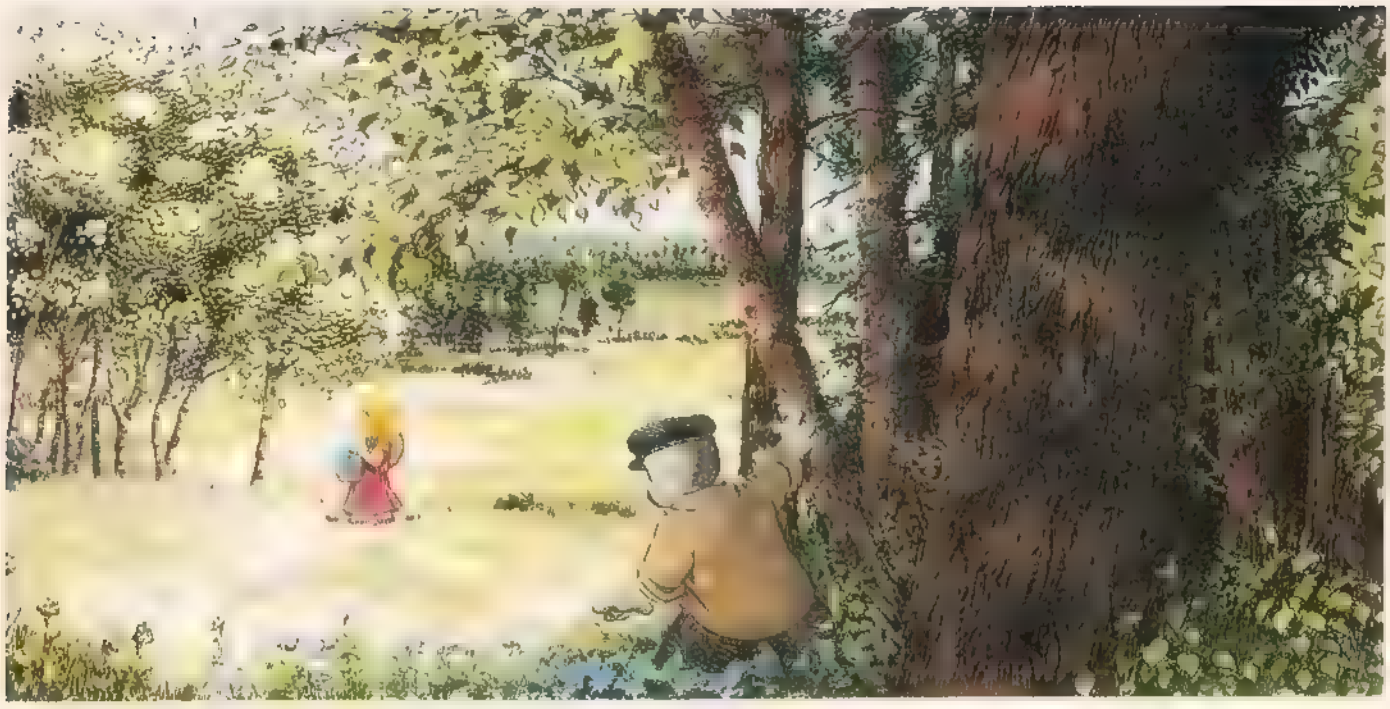

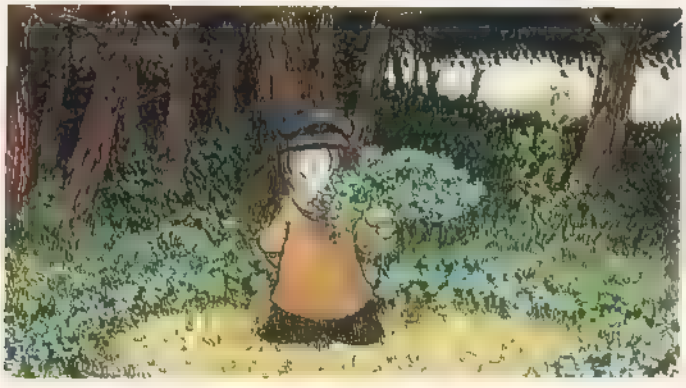

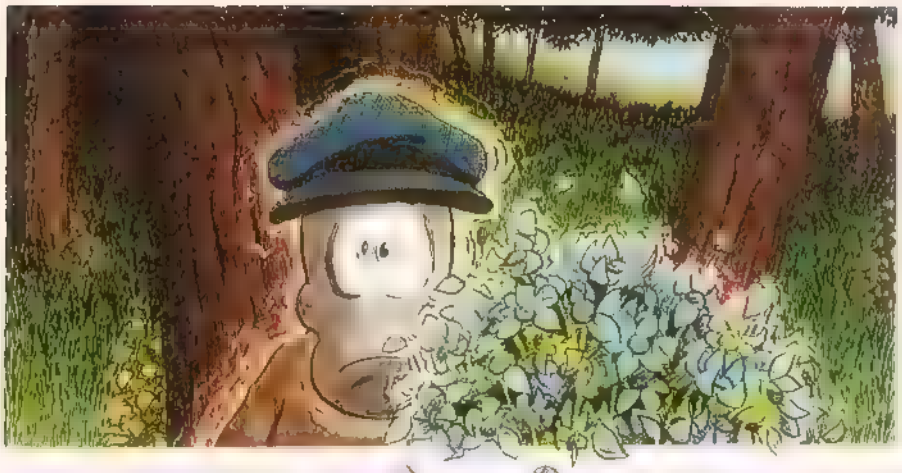

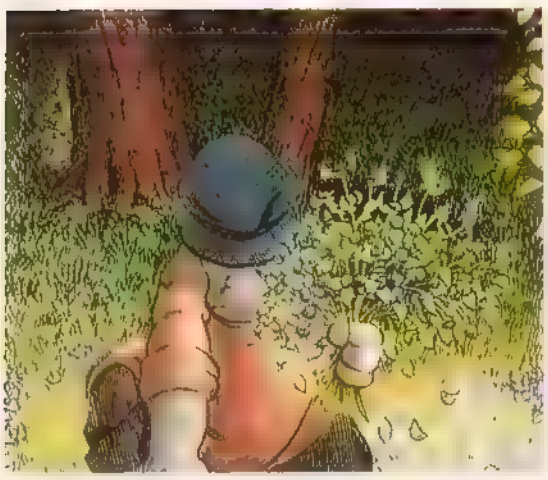

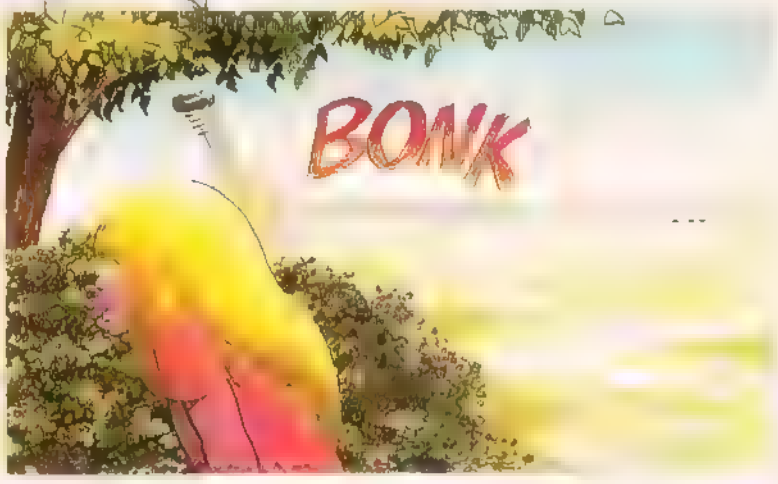
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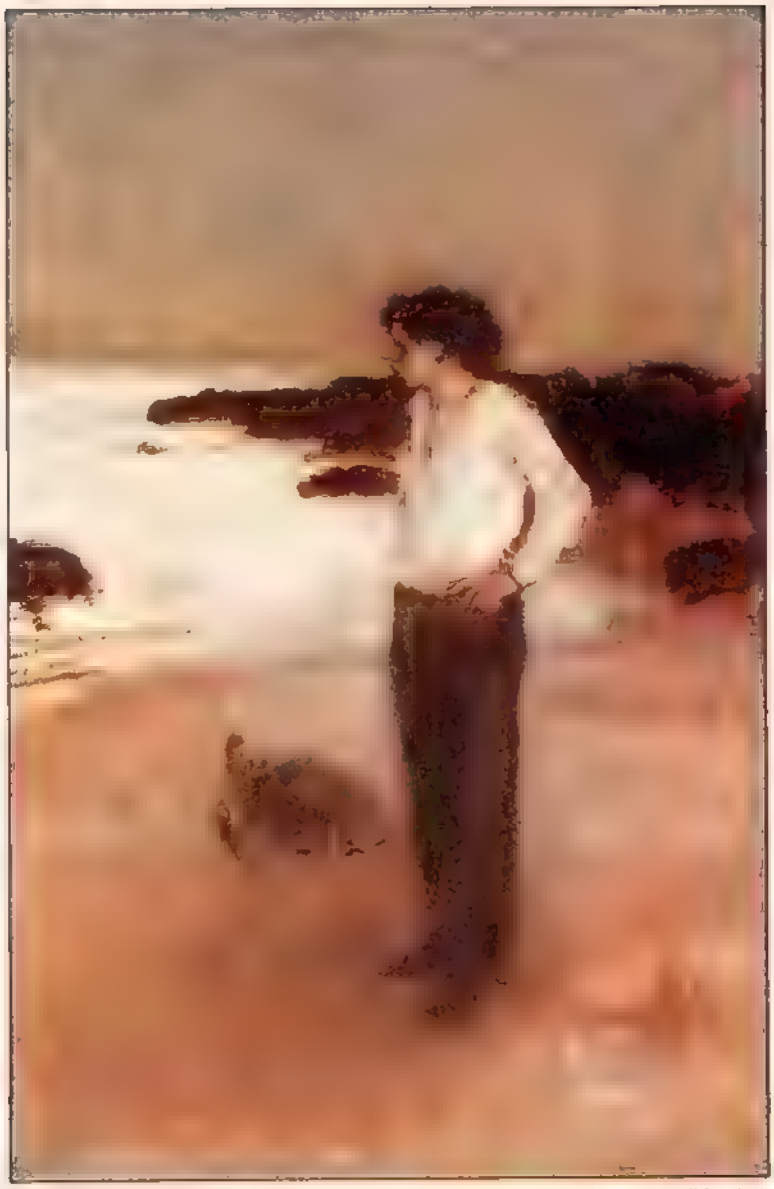
Article

INFINITY

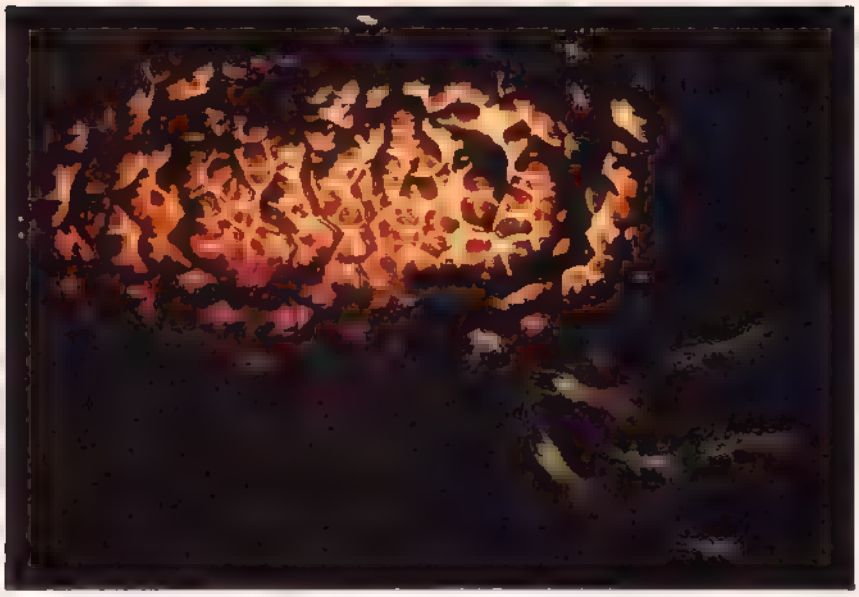
where Rock and Fantasy art meet



Amphibian Weather
by Glenn Pepple

Since the emergence of acid rock in the Sixties, when album covers and concert posters stretched for ever wilder visuals to match the music, there has been a close bond between rock and fantasy art and imagery. Into the Seventies, more and more album covers utilized the talents of such established fantasy artists as Frank Frazetta (an entire series of **Molly Hatchett** albums), Richard Corben and Berni Wrightson (the first two **Meat Loaf** albums), and many others.

All artwork © 1985 to the individual artists
All lyrics © 1985 Spider Barbour



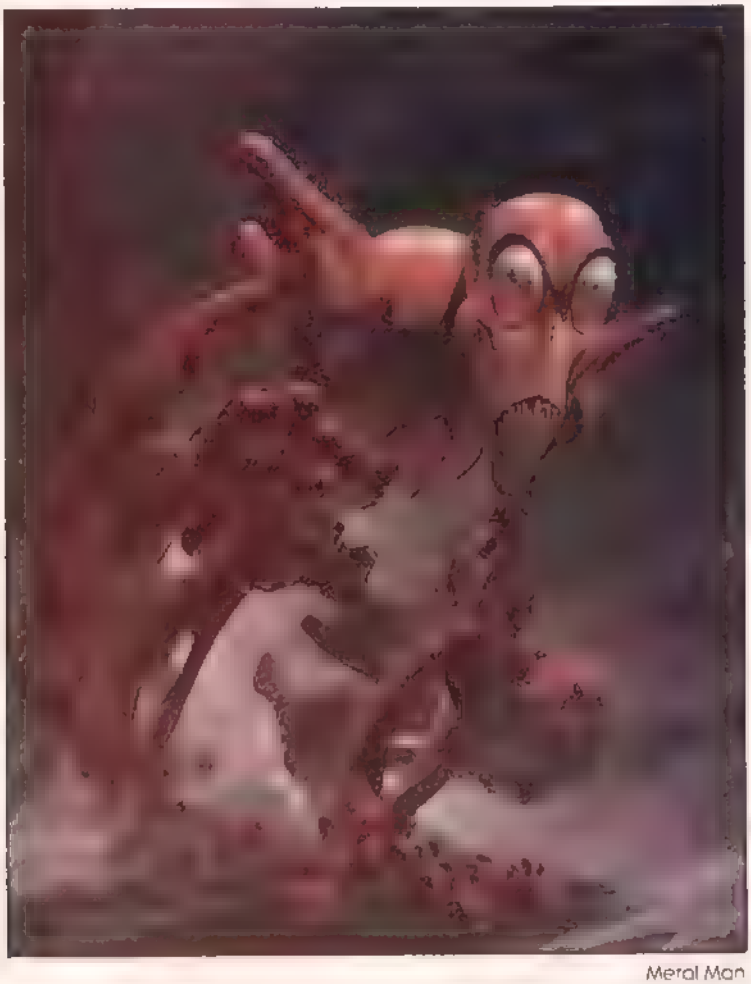
Lepidoprer Ride
by Anita F Barbour

Dog Star
by Da na Graziunas

With **Infinity**, Woodstock-based musician and writer Spider Barbour has created an album of songs that all conjure up—sometimes wittily and playfully; sometimes hauntingly—their own fantasy and science-fiction style subjects. As the project took form, his wife, Anita, an artist herself, suggested having drawings done to accompany the **Infinity** lyrics sheet when he was ready to submit his demo tapes to the record companies. The Woodstock area is home to many artists associated with fantasy illustration and comics. Most of them were friendly with Spider and Anita.

Some Fish Can Fly
by Jim Starlin

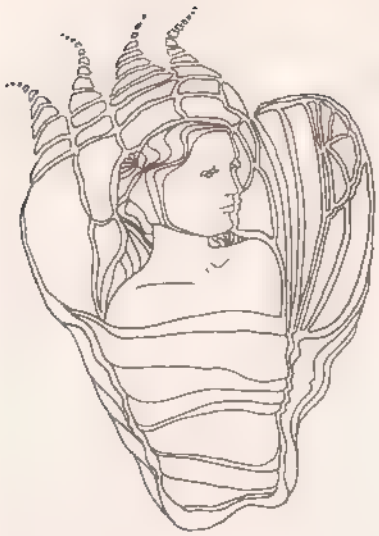
Reading the lyrics and listening to the initial tapes, the artists—many of them contributors to **Epic** and **Marvel**, such as Jim Starlin, Berni Wrightson, Jeffrey Jones, Jon J Muth, Daina Graziunas, and Dan Green—became more and more caught up in the project. Simple drawings expanded into full scale paintings in many cases. Some work literally represented the lyrics or title, others took the mood of the music into more personal visions. The result is a more unique and total meshing of rock and fantasy than has normally been done before.



Meral Man
by Berni Wrightson

Erebus Odora
by Jeffrey Jones

Intrigued by the premise, we made arrangements to print the art portfolio. The **Infinity** demo tapes are still being refined by Spider Barbour and submission of the material to record companies hasn't begun yet. It may be some time before it actually becomes an album. Until then, the art exists here, and through it, the music of **Infinity.**



The Great Chameleon
by Ann Wilson

Lime Horizons by Dan Green

Infinity
by Jon J Muth

Coming at you metallurgically,
I was made before your time.
Maybe you just don't remember me,
But you drove me around in your prime,
And I showed you a pretty wild time.
—from **METAL MAN**

Cause it's over your head,
it's much too much to handle.
Strings of zeroes pouring out across the page
and over the edge of your mind,
won't make a dent in the world.
—from **INFINITY**

It Came From Beneath the Sea
by Alex Bialy

Has a funny name, **Erebus odora,**
born of forest flora where it once survived.
Wouldn't it be great to see alive?
But its forest home is too far south to walk to,
And no one you can talk to has ever heard its name
or can recall seeing it sadly framed.
—from **EREBUS ODORA**

COBALT-60

BASED ON CHARACTERS BY VAUGHN BODĒ

ARTWORK BY MARK BODĒ

STORY BY LARRY TODD

©MARK & BARBARA BODĒ 1984

SYNOPSIS

FE 56, king of the Radio People, is dead. So is his queen, AU 80. To all appearances, they were killed by one of the ravaging bands of mutants who live in the wastelands beyond Radio City. Since their deaths, the new rulers, Strontium 90 and his prime minister, Polonium 210, have conducted a reign of terror against the increasingly violent and antagonistic mutants. The Holy Molders, priests of human genetics, seek out and purge any who show signs of even marginal mutation. Mutants themselves are slaughtered by the military, and sterilization edicts are issued. But, in one vital matter, Strontium is prepared to risk the goodwill of his strongest supporters. BBC, heiress to the Radio throne, is approaching maturity, and despite the disapproval of the priests and his advisers, Strontium intends to wed her.

However, unknown to any of them, a far better claimant to the throne still exists. Cobalt 60, the son of FE 56 and AU 80, was sent away to safety while he was still a child, and raised by a marginal mutant. Now, grown to manhood, he keeps his features hidden by a hood of white cloth and strikes for the mutants, without warning, killing those he was born to rule.

But Cobalt 60 has friends among the non-mutants—including Franklin Gothic Green, who is upset, for aliens have been mining and destroying his precious archaeological dig sites. Worse, these aliens, the Bigeyes, have formed a temporary alliance with the Radio people, to seek ancient nuclear weapons and the lost wealth of the legendary IRS. To thwart them, Cobalt and Franklin have formed their own alliance with the Croc cavalry, an army of crazed, ravenous mutants whose leader General Hisstory is for some reason devotedly loyal to Cobalt 60.

WUMPA WUMPA WUMPA
HUMMMMMMMMMM-
CRAK
BOOM!
DA WORM SAYS DIS'LL ONLY TAKE A FEW SECONDS.
I SURE HOPE SO! IT'S DAMN CROWDED IN HERE!
CRAP! LOOK AT THIS BLAST GLASS! THOSE LIL' RADIO BASTURDS BETTER KNOW WHERE THIS OGRE LIVED!
POP! ALL RIGHT MR. CORDWAINER BIGEYE WE HAVE ARRIVED. I ASSUME YOU WILL PROVIDE ME WITH MY FEE SHORTLY... GRZZZZT POP
HELL! HE NEVER THINKS- ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE-

© 1985 Barbara Bodé and Mark Bodé

WELL LIKE IT OR NOT, IT GONNA BE A FEW DAYS BEFORE THE RADIOS ARRIVE, SO WE MIGHT AS WELL MAKE OURSELVES COMFORTABLE...
IF DAT WORM'LL LET US!
EH, YAH, YA' KNOW FOR THE WORMS SAKE AND WHO KNOWS MAYBE OURS TOO, WE MIGHT SEND A BIGEYE CREW OUT WITH TRANS-GUNDERS AND SEE WHATS UNDER DIS BLASTGLASS...
AYE, AYE, SIR!
TAKE SOME GUNS, YA NEVER CAN TELL WHAT WILL BE LURKING IN AMBUSH IN A PLACE LIKE THIS...
YO! CORDWAINER I'M GETTING A MESSAGE ON DA RADIO!
DO TELL TARPAPER I'LL BE RIGHT THERE!
SCREEET CRAK
HELLO!
MR. BIGEYE THIS IS POLONIUM 210, IF YOU'LL LOOK AT YOUR MAP-
YOU'LL SEE THE RUINS OF HIGHWAY 5 .. THIS IS THE SAFEST ROUTE TO TRAVEL, AS WE HAVE SOME FORTS ALONG IT. WE EXPECT TO BE AT THE AGREED LOCATION IN 2 DAYS
HISSSS ATTACK DEM RIGHT AWAY YAH?!
TWO DAYS? HISSTORY WE HAVE TO MOVE FASTER! I WANT US ALL TO BE IN POSITION WHEN THOSE RADIOS ARRIVE!

AND LETS BE READY FOR ANYTHING! WERE AHEAD OF THEM NOW. LETS STAY AHEAD...
CROC SSSSSSS BREAK CAMP..WE MOVIN' OUT!...
ROAR! ROAR! ROAR!
SHIT! EAT AND RUN, EAT AND RUN!
SPECIALLY ON DIS DIET! I WISH I HAD SOME TOILET PAPER!! URP!
WHAFFO?! YOU JUST SHIT IN YOUR PANTS ANYWAY!
SAY WHAT, FUKFACE!
FUKFACE WHO YOU CALLIN-
YOU YA' FUKFACE!
CLAC
BLAM! BLAM!
HISSTORY YOU REALLY GOT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS CONSTANT ATTRITION OF YOUR TROOPS...
WHY? THEY JUST ON K.P. NOW...
I STILL THINK YOU GOT IT WRONG. A ARMY MOVES ON ITS STOMACH, NOT A STOMACH MOVES ON IT'S ARMY...
WELL, AT LEAST DOSE TROOPS ARE STILL GONNA BE IN DA ARMY!... LETS MOVE...
FOOD! FOOD!

COBALT 60.... HOW ON EARTH DID YOU BECOME FRIENDLY WITH THIS SAVAGE REPTILE?
BLAM
30 METERS AND CLOSING
SAVED HIS LIFE..
IT WAS ABOUT EIGHT YEARS AGO... MY GUARDIANESS OLD MOG HAD FOUND A LIBRARY AND TAUGHT ME TO READ. WE SPENT ALOT OF TIME THERE.. ONE DAY WHILE READING TO MOG, I HEARD A COMMOTION
READ ME ACT 4 FROM HAMLET AGAIN BOY...
IT WAS A GANG OF CROCS, KILLING A LITTLE CROC, WELL, I USUALLY DONT KILL MUTANTS, BUT I HAD SOME TARGET PRACTICE...
PUNT PUNT PUNT
ACK!
AND THE LITTLE CROC FOLLOWED ME HOME. I TAUGHT HIM TO FETCH AN TALK AND TIE KNOTS AND EVEN READ A LITTLE..OLD MOG LET ME KEEP HIM..
URP!
AT LEAST UNTIL HE GOT BIG THAT WAS ABOUT 2 YEARS AND THEN HE WENT OUT TO START A TROOP...
HE NEVER FORGOT WE'RE FRIENDS, I GUESS. THE CALVARY HAD ALWAYS BEEN GOOD TO ME AND MOG
WHERE IS OLD MOG?

SHE'S DEAD... BEEN FOR FOUR YEARS... RADIOS DID IT! IT TOOK 30 SOLDIERS TO BRING HER DOWN...
GAK! I'VE WONDERED ABOUT THAT!!
DIE RADIO BASTUR
YOU HAVE?..... "CHOKE"
YES WHY YOU AN OBVIOUS HUMAN WITH NO VISIBLE DEFORMITIES, SHOULD SEEK THE COMPANY OF MUTANTS IS PUZZLE ENOUGH!
BUT THAT YOU SHOULD PUT SO MUCH ENERGY AND HATRED INTO YOUR CAMPAIGN AGAINST RADIO CITY HAS ALWAYS MADE ME DIZZY WITH IMPLICATIONS.
FRANKLIN?...
YAH...
YOU'RE BRAIN BOUND, YOU THINK TOO MUCH, AND TELL YOUR KNIVES TO SHUT UP!!
THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP
WELL, I'D SAY THAT ABOUT CLINCHES IT!!
HELL!

YOU SAID IT LADDY BUCK! DONT KNOW WHAT ALL IM GONNA TELL FRIEND WORM UP THERE.
SIR, YOU SHOULD TELL HIM HE'S WORKIN AGAINST HIMSELF, BEING SO IMPATIENT!
IF THAT TIME TOWER OF HIS REALLY IS A TIME SPACE MACHINE HE'S GOT AN INFINITE AMOUNT OF TIME TO PAY THE RENT ON DAT THING OR WHATEVER HE'S SO WORKED UP OVER.
SO, I ELLECT YOU TO TELL DA WORM THERES NO FISSIONABLES HERE!
BEGGIN' YOUR PARDON SIR, I BE HEARIN ME MAMA CALLIN BACK ON ALGOL!
HEY WHAT SO THIS!
FISSIONABLES SIR! BUT WE CHECKED THAT SECTOR!
ITS MOVING!! EITHER THERE'S A RADIOACTIVE MONSTER OUT THERE
OR SOMEBODY IS DRAGGING AROUND A PACK OF POORLY SHIELDED ATOMIC BOMBS!
SIR!
IT MUST BE THOSE RADIOS! I WONDER WHAT THEY'RE GONNA DO WITH ATOMIC BOMBS!
SIR! YOU BE WANTIN ME TO PUT A REACTION DAMPER ON THOSE ARMS?!

YES, PUT THAT THING ON AND LOCATE THEM TOO...
HOW YA DOIN COLONEL, GENERAL AH?
COLONEL.... MR BIGEYE...
WELL, COLONEL! I SEE YOU'VE COME WELL SUPPLIED FOR A MAJOR EFFORT!
YES, I HAVE.. CORDWAINER BIGEYE, MEET MY AIDE STRONTIUM 90!
HELLO MR 90.. PLEASED TA MEET YA!
FILTHY MUTANT!!
AH... PARDON ME, I'M NOT A MUTANT!
YOU CANT FOOL ME! WHERE ARE YOUR LEGS?!
WE LEFT THEM HOME ON ALGOL IN OUR OTHER PAIR OF PANTS!
WHAT! WHAT, DO YOU WANT 2,0?!
TUG TUG TUG
SIRE, IF YOU KEEP ON LIKE THAT YOUR GOING TO MAKE HIM HOSTILE!
FILTHY THING TRIED TO TOUCH ME!! ACK
THATS REALLY TOO BAD SIRE, BUT IF YOU DONT LIKE HIM, STAY AWAY FROM HIM!
IT'LL BE A PLEASURE
GOOD NOW WILL YOU PLEASE RUN A-LONG SIRE AND LET ME GET ON WITH THIS!
OH, VERY WELL..

(continues on page 55)

BOOKVIEW

by Jo Duffy

Topping this month's list of fantasy and science-fiction books not to be missed is **Judith Martin's** latest—**Miss Manners' Guide to Rearing Perfect Children,** a companion volume to the earlier, highly successful **Miss Manners' Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Behavior. Martin** (in her guise as **Miss Manners**) is not only a witty person (open at random to almost any page of this book, and you'll probably find yourself smiling, chuckling, or in helpless tears of laughter), she is a warm, wise, and sensible one as well. Etiquette is a funny business, about which most people have the most extraordinarily funny ideas, and **Miss Manners** realizes it. There are no arcane practices subscribed to here, and few great mysteries unveiled. Courtesy is, one realizes as one reads, largely a matter of kindness and commonsense, practiced in the interests of enabling all (or most) of us to rub along comfortably together, and even the most complex social pattern can usually be mastered, once one sees how **Miss Manners** has distilled it down to a few easily memorized rules. (Or, if you really *do* forget something, just go back to the book.)

It is a scintillating piece of writing. The world of **Miss Manners'** description seems rich and strange and romantic, like the setting of some great novel of the past. Yet the issues she deals with, in her measured, ladylike way, are largely of the most mundane and modern sort, from the endless aggravations of handling those who insist on turning the households of divorced persons into armed camps, to such serious and delicate problems as how one continues to coexist with a family member who may have molested, or contemplated molesting, one's child.

As for why a non-fiction book of the social graces has earned a place in this column, I can only state that while I am aware that this is an area in which I myself am sadly deficient and improving only slowly, with much backsliding along the way (honestly, my parents are dear, civilized people who reared me well, but I'm inherently barbaric), **Miss Manners'** thesis—that we live in a world where people not only *ought* to be, but genuinely *attempt* to be polite to friends, relatives, and strangers alike—is one of the loveliest fantasies I can imagine

Has success spoiled **Douglas Adams?** Apparently. **So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish,** the latest sequel to the hilarious **Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy** trilogy, is one of the most appalling pieces of tripe I've ever read. And frankly, I'm a little surprised, and more than a little relieved, to find I feel this way. Because I myself am a writer. And like most writers, I have an ego that's as fragile as tissue paper, and as edged and obnoxious as a razor blade. So, whenever I read something really smashing and impressive, I first enjoy it, and then wish I'd written it myself, and then decide I'll never measure up, or if I do, my work will never be published anyway, so who'll know? For dessert, if I'm feeling *really* masochistic, I try to find out how old the author was when it was written, and compare it with what I had done by the same age/or try to figure out how much I have to improve how fast to measure up by the time I'm that old. Yet, after four years of feeling that way whenever I read something by **Douglas Adams,** my chief reaction to a really bad book from him is one of disappointment.

Adams can still turn a phrase more neatly than almost anyone else, yet somehow, he has gone way off the track here, retreading old ground to the serious detriment of his earlier stories. He is loved and popular and successful and, I hope, as rich as he richly deserves to be, but one cannot escape the impression that this entire novel is a series of self-confident addresses to his supporters. I wonder if it would make any sense whatsoever to a person who was previously unfamiliar with the series and so lacked access to the constant in joking that goes on.

Since those jokes that are not "in" are glib without being funny, and Adams has abandoned the fantastic symbols of alien creatures and civilizations, and set his satiric sights directly on the obvious targets of our own daily life—the Sony Walkmen, the vidiots, the Southern Californians, the weather—the humor seems forced, self-indulgent, and bitchy.

Douglas Adams' other recent book—**The Meaning of Liff**—left me more than cold; it chilled me. It was a collaborative effort with **John Lloyd,** one of the masterminds behind television's achingly funny **Not the Nine O'Clock News,** and therefore, presumably, a very funny man, and I still don't understand how two people of such talent and credentials as **Adams** and **Lloyd** could have come up with this one. Briefly, **Liff** is a dictionary of place names which the authors found intrinsically amusing, and for which they wrote a series of new and unlikely definitions. I can't quote any of them here, because I never intend to open the book again. It is so full of graphically revolting images (even the most innocuous entries are cross-referenced to something horrible) that it's dreadful to contemplate anyone being able to sustain their creation for an entire book. Admittedly, there is humor to be found in the strangest and most inappropriate things, and there is an occasional allure to the prurient and the juvenile for most of us, but while my endurance held, I found reading **The Meaning of Liff** rather like watching and listening as a group of eight-year-olds read skin magazines together, then took a refreshing swim through a cesspool, and rounded the whole thing out by sorting through the used bandage bin at the local hospital.

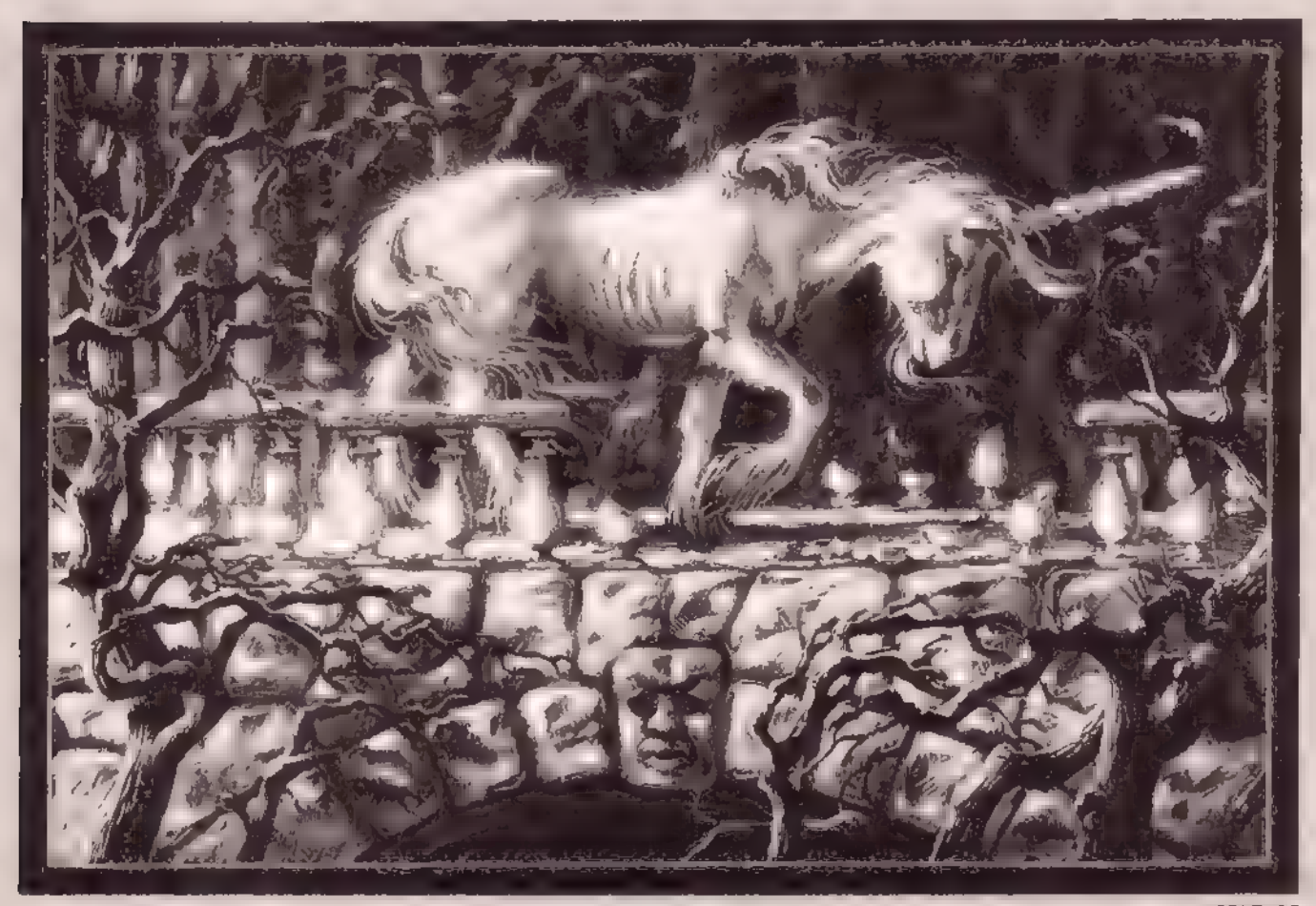
So, to those of you who are **Douglas Adams** fans, convinced that he would go on forever, writing splendid stories about the cast of the **Hitch-Hiker** books, I must with apologies offer you one in joke, and a word of advice: *Panic.*

We would like to take this opportunity to recommend that those of you who have not already done so run right out and purchase a copy of **How to Draw Rocks—A Complete Guide (Secrets from a Master)** by sometime **Epic Illustrated** contributor **Ken Macklin,** in cooperation with West Coast artist **Garry Winnick.** While the cover price of this slender little volume may seem a bit steep to the casual browser, the clear, easy-to-decipher illustrations and lucid, step-by-step instructions mark it as an invaluable reference tool, both for the collector and for any professional who wishes to hone his approach to an always difficult subject.

UNICORN AUTUMN

art by Alix Berenzy
story by Archie Goodwin

The unicorn was weary. Once, he felt certain, such a feeling was as alien to him as the land he now walked. Once. Some hazy time when his quest had begun. Dry leaves skittered past his hooves. The breeze that chased them was touched by cold. Another season was fading. As the magic had. As his kind had with it. He could no longer recall how many seasons had passed since that awareness came. No more than he could recall when he last found a trace, the slightest hint of another unicorn. Still, as seasons came and went, he traveled, seeking areas ever more remote from the fields of men, uncertain if what started as a quest was any more now than mere wandering.



Art © 1985 Alix Berenzy. Story © 1985 Archie Goodwin.

In his weariness, the unicorn did not notice at what point the endless forest, barren and lonely, devoid even of the sound of birds, became something more.

The ruin was vast. Too vast, despite encroaching trees and bramble, for the forest to overcome. Scarred, broken columns thrust like pale ghosts above pools turned dark, mournfully stagnant. The unicorn quickened his stride, excited in spite of himself by the magnificence, no matter how disfigured by the harsh passage of time or fury of the elements.

He heard whispers here. Whispers of a younger world. A world that had belonged to him and others like him. A world where beauty was honored; and life had purpose. His gait slowed. With each shattered flagstone, each fallen cornice, each pond grown brackish with waste, the whispers turned mocking. The desecration appeared far-reaching as the ruins themselves. The unicorn wondered that nature could be so relentlessly thorough.

Then, in a small, shadowed courtyard obscured by the far larger plaza that it adjoined, he found the statue.

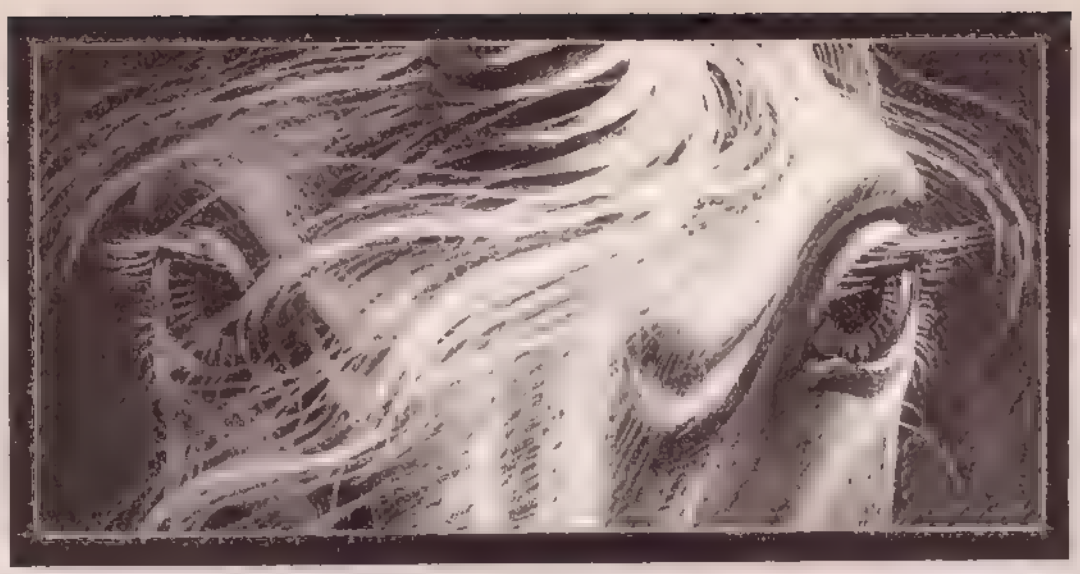
For a long time, the unicorn stared, unmoving. The statue seemed more finely carved than other chipped and crumbling examples he had passed. Though the pedestal was stained, the white marble figure rising from it was without blemish, perfect in its purity amid the surrounding ruin. The unicorn continued to stare until at last darkness obscured the stone form's graceful features. The night was cold. The unicorn found shelter and, in time, sleep. With the sleep came dreams, hazy, yet filled with promise and hope.

Sometime in the small and darkest hours, noises brought him awake. Scratching. Scuttling. Followed by voices, rasping and ugly.

Trolls. Twisted and bent as the trees of the forest from which they came swarming. Their tools and weapons clattering and banging, the horde swept across the plaza beyond where the unicorn had taken shelter. Gleefully, they fell upon any structure or statuary still upright. Toppling. Pounding. Crushing. Some pieces of marble were carted back into the forest darkness, perhaps to become cairns or altars to whatever dark Gods were worshipped by trolls. But of use or not, nothing was spared. This work was their pleasure. Their picks and their pry bars struck out at any object which caught their glittering eyes.

And inevitably, in the small courtyard off the main plaza, something did.

Unseen, the unicorn witnessed their howling assault, at first in shock as the gnarled figures heaved mightily at the coils and lines attached to bring the statue down, then finally...



Rage. He was among the trolls before they sensed his presence. Hooves flashing, striking. His head ducked and darted, thrusting the great spike that jutted proudly from his brow. Again and again. With each thrust, each swing and jerk of the unicorn's head, a troll died.

And more swarmed to take the place of the fallen. The unicorn had fury and strength. The trolls had numbers. And rope. And weapons. And the blind, brute courage of creatures born without imagination. They died. But still they came on, massing, circling, closing ever more tightly upon the pale marble statue's lone defender.

Until there were no more. The ruins were still. The grating howls of the trolls, the crash and din of their weapons, no longer echoed. The only sound was the unicorn, drawing slow, racking breaths. And those, too, were fading.

He sank to the ground at the base of the statue. From the cold night sky, snow was beginning to fall. Autumn was over. Only Winter remained. The unicorn shuddered, not from the cold, but his pain. He was dying. But here, surrounded by the final splendor of a different age, he was no longer weary.

The unicorn looked up to the unmarred beauty of the statue's face. Through the drifting snowflakes, the features seemed to soften. One touched the statue's smooth marble cheek. And it clung there, as his vision dimmed, glistening like a tear.

MEDIAVIEW

by Dennis O'Neil

Magical power,
Marvelous action!
Chopping wood,
carrying water...
—Zen poem

John Carpenter's movie **Starman** unconfused me about the **Bernhard Goetz** case, and for that I'm grateful.

The morning of the day I saw **Starman** the papers were full of **Goetz's** acquittal. **Goetz,** you may remember, admitted shooting and wounding four teenagers armed with screwdrivers on a Manhattan subway after one of them asked him for five dollars. I remember my reflex reaction when I first heard the story. I thought, "Good for him, whoever he was." Then I was shocked at myself. I'm usually not vindictive. I'm not a weapons freak. I'm probably not even in favor of capital punishment. To me, violence is ugly unless it is controlled and put at the service of art. Yet I had silently cheered this subway gunman.

Later, after I'd learned more details, my approval began to be flavored with doubt. **Goetz,** the papers said, had done more than defend himself. He had followed two of the youngsters into an adjoining car and shot them in the back, possibly endangering other passengers. Nothing heroic about that, nothing noble. Those last shots, its seemed, were fired by an angry, irrational man, and there was little excuse for them. But still, I was hoping for further extenuating circumstances—I *wanted* **Goetz** to be totally justified.

The New York media were quick to observe that life was imitating art. Any number of movies in recent years had portrayed a lone, courageous citizen avenging the innocent by taking zeal and bullets to the street—**Death Wish, Death Wish II, Fighting Back, Sudden Impact** and **10 To Midnight,** to name a few. I saw most of these in a Brooklyn theater serving a blue-collar neighborhood—the kind of area my mother would call, rightfully, a *decent* neighborhood—and not since I heard the cheers accompanying the **St. Louis Cardinals** winning the World Series in 1965 have I heard such unanimous joy among so many people as when the on-screen good guys blew away the psychopunks. Nor was I a detached observer. I responded as heartily, if not as noisily, as anyone in the place. The part of me whose job it is to contemplate and criticize mass entertainment realized I was being manipulated, shamelessly, and none too cleverly at that, but the part of me who walks the streets and rides the subways, who's felt a mugger's knife against the throat, didn't care; I *loved* seeing the bastards get theirs.

Walking home after the show, **Larry The Kid** and I would argue. "How can you stand that stuff?" he'd ask. "All it does is glorify killing."

"I'm not saying it's moral or valid or even good cinema," I'd replied. "But did you hear that audience? It really hit 'em where they live. I've got to ask what that means. I *think* it means that those folks have lost faith in the system. They're feeling like victims, and they're sick of it. Their whole lives, they've behaved honorably and their reward is that they're living in terror. These movies are, in a way, folk art. They're not sophisticated—as modern movies go, they're pretty crude—but they do speak to their audience's gut issues."

"They're not *speaking* to them, they're *exploiting* them," Larry had replied.

"Maybe," I'd conceded. "The distinction between 'speaking to' and 'exploiting' is one I'm not sure how to make. And anyway, all art, of any kind, exploits its subject matter to some degree."

"Depends on how you define 'exploit'."

We never settled the argument. We just stopped going to those kinds of movies.

Now, a year later, **Bernhard Goetz** had used his revolver and, along with most New Yorkers, I read every word the papers printed about the case. We speculated aloud: what would the grand jury do? Would Goetz beat it? Or would they want to make an example of him? Last Friday, the jury dismissed charges of attempted murder against **Goetz;** instead, he'll stand trial for illegal weapons possessions. Clearly, this is a kind of vindication—a moral victory.

I didn't know whether to applaud or lament. How could I be so utterly conflicted?

I hoped for something—a telegram from God?—to help me decide what I felt.

Starman did it. Art does that sometimes—tells you what you don't know you already know.

Structurally, **Starman** is a straight-on action flick. The plot has an extraterrestrial crash-landing in a rural area, assuming the guise of a recently deceased house painter—he reconstructs the human's body from a lock of hair—and, with the aid of the man's widow, attempting to reach a site where a space ship can rescue him. The couple is pursued by a military officer who assumes for no real reason that the alien is unfriendly, and is clearly planning unpleasantness for the visitor. The officer wants to take him alive, but is willing to take him dead if that's not possible. Director **John Carpenter** does his usual nice job of wringing maximum suspense from what is essentially a very simple situation. As a thriller, **Starman** is quite satisfying.

But **Starman's** greatest virtues are not in its story, but rather in **Carpenter's** use of locale and homey, ordinary things. He gives us a highway at dawn so vividly that I ached to be there and a truck stop at midnight so real I could smell the coffee. He reminds us of how wonderful an ordinary stretch of country road can be, of what a beautiful country the United States is—not by displaying the Grand Canyon or the Rockies, but by inviting us to look at what we usually don't bother to see. When his alien discovers food for the first time, we remember that the taste of fresh apple pie is astonishing. When the couple finally kiss, we realize that sex is not always steamy and snickery, but can be the ultimate tenderness. **Starman** teaches the lesson of the great religions and some of the very greatest poets—that we are surrounded by tremendous beauty and meaning.

Starman's other lesson is equally religious, obvious and important—life, all life, is sacred. When **Carpenter** introduces military hardware into the movie, I was physically revulsed. Things used only for killing are ugly. They may be necessary, and they're certainly fascinating, but they're ugly as sin. We just don't notice that because they're usually presented to us as objects of veneration: **Eastwood's Magnum, Schwartzenegger's** sword, **John Wayne's** carbine—these are badges of heroism. In **Starman,** we are treated to the rare perception that weapons are horrible.

Starman is not a masterpiece, merely a good movie. My extreme reaction to it is, of course, really a reaction to **Bernhard Goetz.** Watching it, my conflicts were resolved, my feelings revealed. I now know that I neither condemn or approve of Goetz's shooting spree. What he did is the act of a desperate man in an increasingly desperate society, one that's largely alienated from apple pie and morning highways and tenderness.

Bernhard Goetz is not to be cheered. He is to be pitied. As am I, and maybe you.

FUTUREVIEW

by John Robert Tebbel and Martha Thomases

The future is about facing new choices. "Do I trust my life to a flying machine?" is fairly commonplace. It has to be faced by more people than astronauts. **Isaac Asimov** and **Ray Bradbury** are two of those well known for their implacable refusal to fly. Making choices, especially unexpected ones, is part of experiencing the future.

The future of medicine, in our speculations, tended to the catastrophic. Wealthy centenarians live on with organs extracted from fitter but poorer beings. We imagined drugs developed for mind control. We imagined, quite frankly, a science worthy of a chrome-plated Dr. Frankenstein. When we came into contact with the medical care of the future a few months ago we found, we're relieved to report, that the future is more nurturing than we had imagined.

No one plans to have a premature baby. Some may get warnings, based on medical history or family traditions. Most, however, are like us, going about normal business until noticing sensation that could be labor contractions, except that they are happening weeks before they are supposed to be.

By having our baby, **Arthur,** six weeks early, we gained admission to a very select club, the Neo-Natal Critical Care Unit. The entry requirements are tough to meet: **Arthur,** at just under five pounds, had a lung disease fairly common in early births (which could cause brain damage or death). We got off easy; some babies were born twelve weeks early and weighed less than three pounds, others were normally-born babies who needed surgery. They all were connected to an assortment of tubes and monitors and were cared for by doctors and nurses who specialized in neonatology, the treatment of newborns.

Some babies were in plastic boxes or cylinders. Others, those with the most tubes and wires, who needed the most attention, were on trays, looking like an especially pink dissection specimen. Parents were the only civilians allowed into the NCCU. With as many as twelve babies being cared for at a time by as many doctors and nurses, no extra bodies could be tolerated. A parent picking up his or her baby is a major occasion, a rarely allowed, carefully supervised, high-tension moment.

Not so long ago, these babies would have died, or led lives complicated by severe disabilities. Some still do. Yet the medical technology of the future that is saving more and more of these kids creates as well as solves problems. Sometimes, though parents are tormented, and medical professionals are stressed to the limit, they still lose a child, in whole or in part.

The well-publicized case of "Baby Fae" is today's extreme example of the kind of choices parents will routinely face in the future. On one hand, transplanting a baboon heart into an infant sounds like a cheap **Universal** mad scientist picture (c. 1938), not to mention more than a little inconvenience to an unsuspecting baboon. On the other hand, what would you do if she was your daughter, and the doctors told you this was her best chance? We'd all like to think we could stomach a little gore if it would save our daughter's life, but it's a capacity we hope is never tested.

Then there's the baby who weighed 20 ounces at birth, or about as much as a big bag of Wonder Bread. She was hooked up to the appropriate machinery, but the doctors didn't have much hope. Four months later, she was still alive, weighed less than five pounds, and still could not live without mechanical assistance. Her hospital tab so far? Over $400,000. To leave her on the machines could run the bill obscenely high, to take her off could be legally described as murder. We all know how far that much money can go when translated into food for the world's truly needy or spare parts for a B-52. In this case, it's one chance for one child.

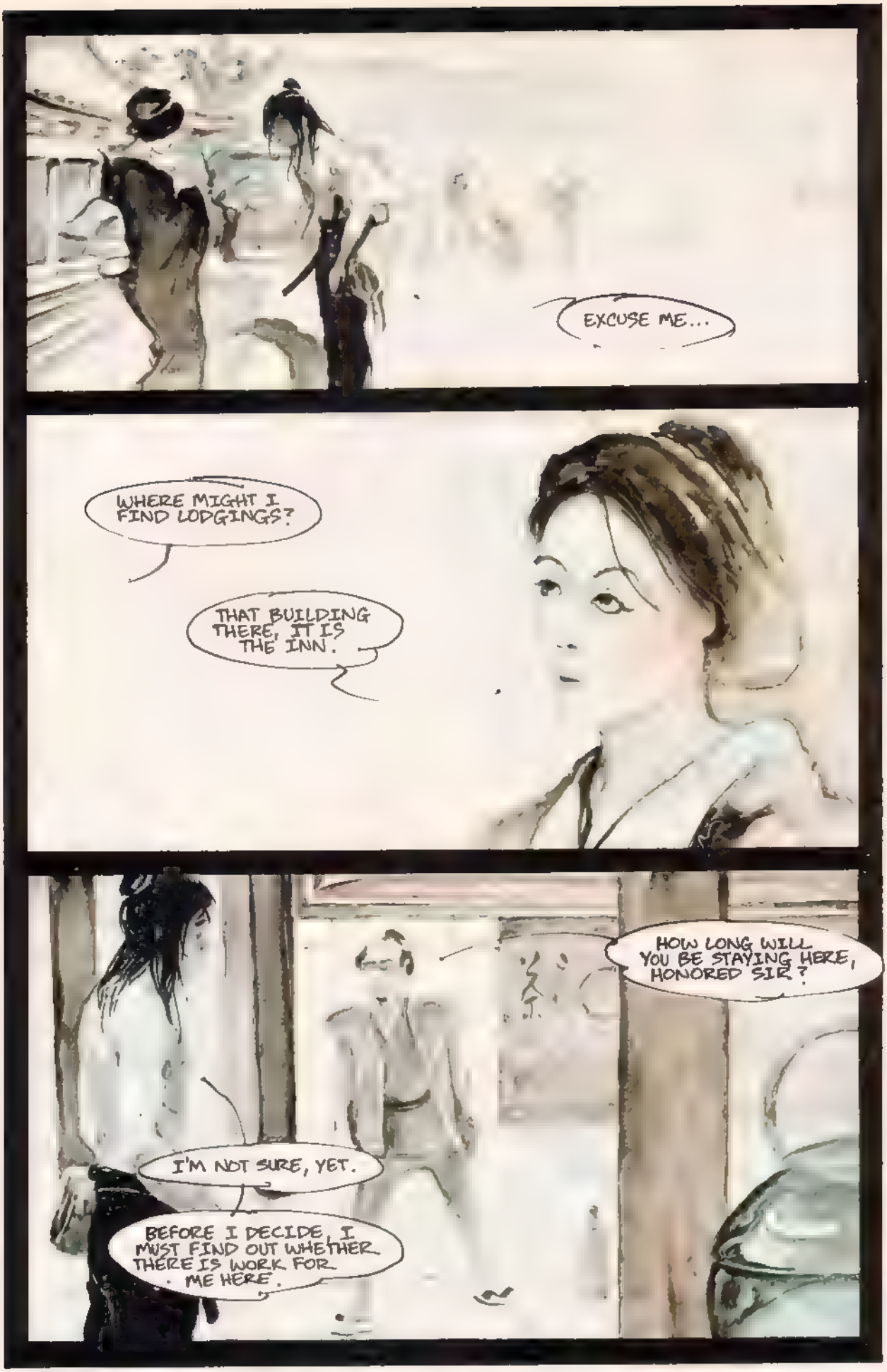
The machinery we depended upon amazed us. The machines and teamwork were awesome. **St. Elsewhere** doesn't begin to suggest it. Some babies had wires monitoring every aspect of their existence. Our **Arthur** was on a respirator ($35 a day) to keep his lungs from collapsing and to maintain his oxygen level. A blood gas monitor ($105 a day) constantly measured the amount of oxygen correctly absorbed by his immature lungs. Another monitor kept his pulse, and watched his breathing rate and blood pressure. As we said, he got off easy.

Most of the machines had adjustable alarms, all set quite conservatively. This meant they went off before there was reason for too much excitement. It was easy to spot new parents because they panicked when they heard an alarm. Nurses and old-timers glanced around to see what it was. Nineteen times out of twenty, nothing was wrong. Even when the problem was real, as in the case of a baby who frequently forgot to breathe, there was no panic. Instead, a nurse would calmly jiggle the baby's foot to jump start the kid's diaphragm.

The trend in medicine for the last decade has been for the patient to be informed, treated with respect, and made part of the health-care team. Often this means the patient must make choices. Expectant mothers attend classes to learn what birth is like. They help make decisions on whether to give birth at home or in a hospital, whether to use anesthesia, and whether they want the company of their partners. People in the last stage of a final illness sometimes choose to reject treatment, preferring to die at home, with their families, instead of in a sterile hospitals. Whatever the future holds for us, it's sure to demand tough choices. What's the good news? Knowledge makes them easier. Why do you think they call it the Information Age?

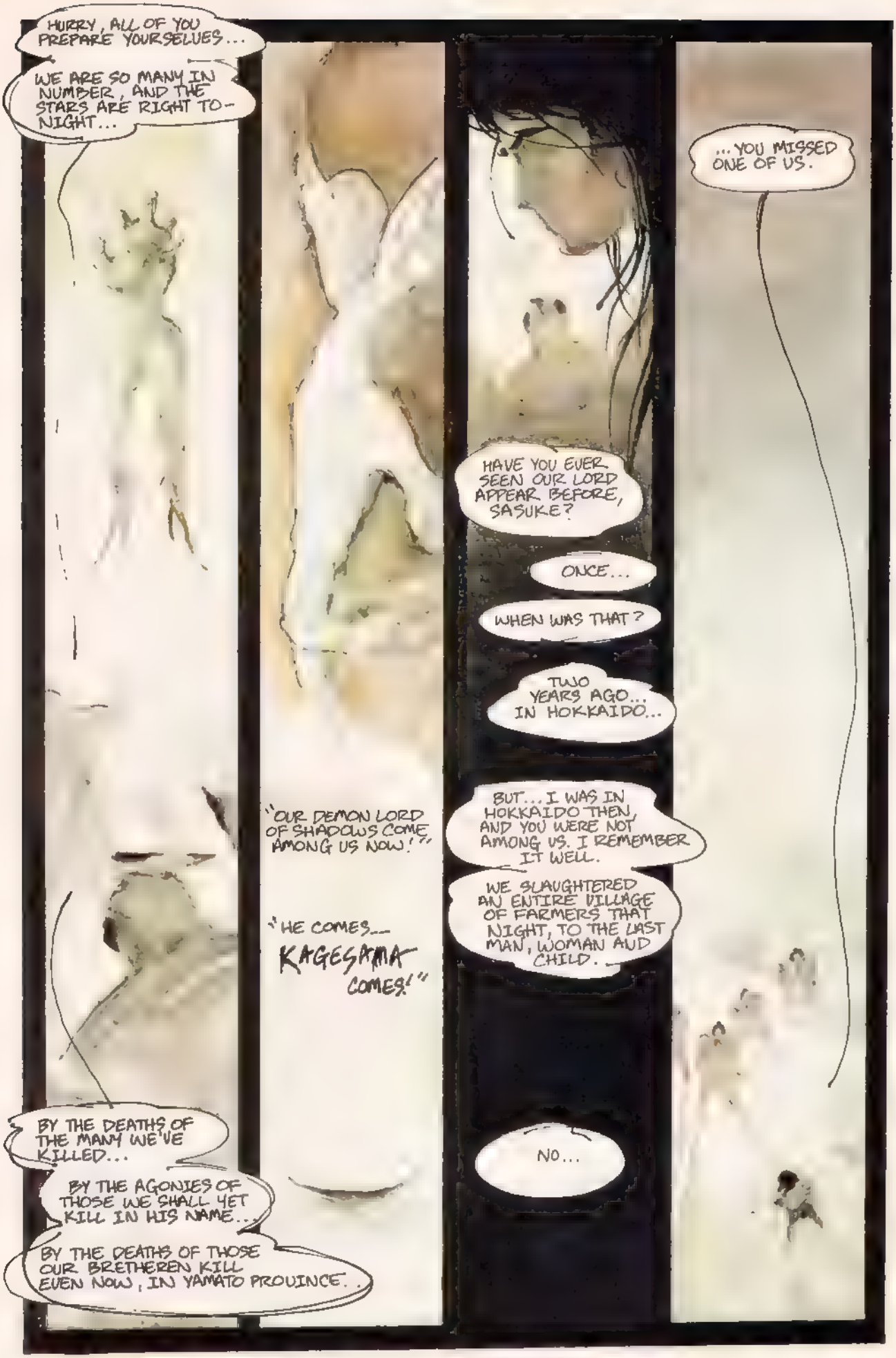
How's **Arthur**? Just fine now, thanks. He can roll over, sit up, eat solid food, and laugh, just like other eight month old babies. He likes looking at paintings by **Keith Haring,** listening to **Dr. Seuss,** music boxes and **the Beatles,** and watching **John Palmer** on the **Today** show. We eagerly look forward to teaching him to talk, walk, and do some secretarial work.

story © 1985 Jo Duffy / artwork © 1985 Kent Williams
necklace design © 1980 Bonnie Wilford


EXCUSE ME...
WHERE MIGHT I FIND LODGINGS?
THAT BUILDING THERE, IT IS THE INN.
HOW LONG WILL YOU BE STAYING HERE, HONORED SIR?
I'M NOT SURE, YET.
BEFORE I DECIDE, I MUST FIND OUT WHETHER THERE IS WORK FOR ME HERE.

THE SIGN...
THAT TRAVELLER... HE WEARS THE SIGN...
HE MUST BE ONE OF THEM...
I WOULD HAVE TURNED HIM AWAY...
IF I'D KNOWN...
WE DO NOT WEAR THAT OPENLY HERE BROTHER...
YOU MUST BE NEW HERE...
COME WITH US.
WE'LL SHOW YOU THE WAY...

OUR POWER MUST BE GREATER WHERE YOU COME FROM.
WHERE IS THAT BROTHER?
I JUST CAME FROM TAMBA...
THERE WAS A GREAT GATHERING OF OUR BRETHEREN THERE RECENTLY, WAS THERE NOT? DID YOU HEAR HOW IT WENT...
IT WENT WELL...
IS THAT WHAT THEY TOLD YOU?
I HEARD IT WENT AWRY, DISASTROUSLY..
MANY WERE KILLED...
YOU'RE LATE!
BUT WE'VE BROUGHT ANOTHER...
WHAT IS YOUR NAME, NEWCOMER?
SASUKE...


HURRY, ALL OF YOU PREPARE YOURSELVES...
WE ARE SO MANY IN NUMBER, AND THE STARS ARE RIGHT TO-NIGHT...
"OUR DEMON LORD OF SHADOWS COME AMONG US NOW!"
"HE COMES... KAGESAMA COMES!"
BY THE DEATHS OF THE MANY WE'VE KILLED...
BY THE AGONIES OF THOSE WE SHALL YET KILL IN HIS NAME...
BY THE DEATHS OF THOSE OUR BRETHEREN KILL EVEN NOW, IN YAMATO PROVINCE.
HAVE YOU EVER SEEN OUR LORD APPEAR BEFORE, SASUKE?
ONCE...
WHEN WAS THAT?
TWO YEARS AGO... IN HOKKAIDO...
BUT... I WAS IN HOKKAIDO THEN, AND YOU WERE NOT AMONG US. I REMEMBER IT WELL.
WE SLAUGHTERED AN ENTIRE VILLAGE OF FARMERS THAT NIGHT, TO THE LAST MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD.
NO...
...YOU MISSED ONE OF US.

I-IT'S HIM--!

STOP HIM... THE GERGMONY...

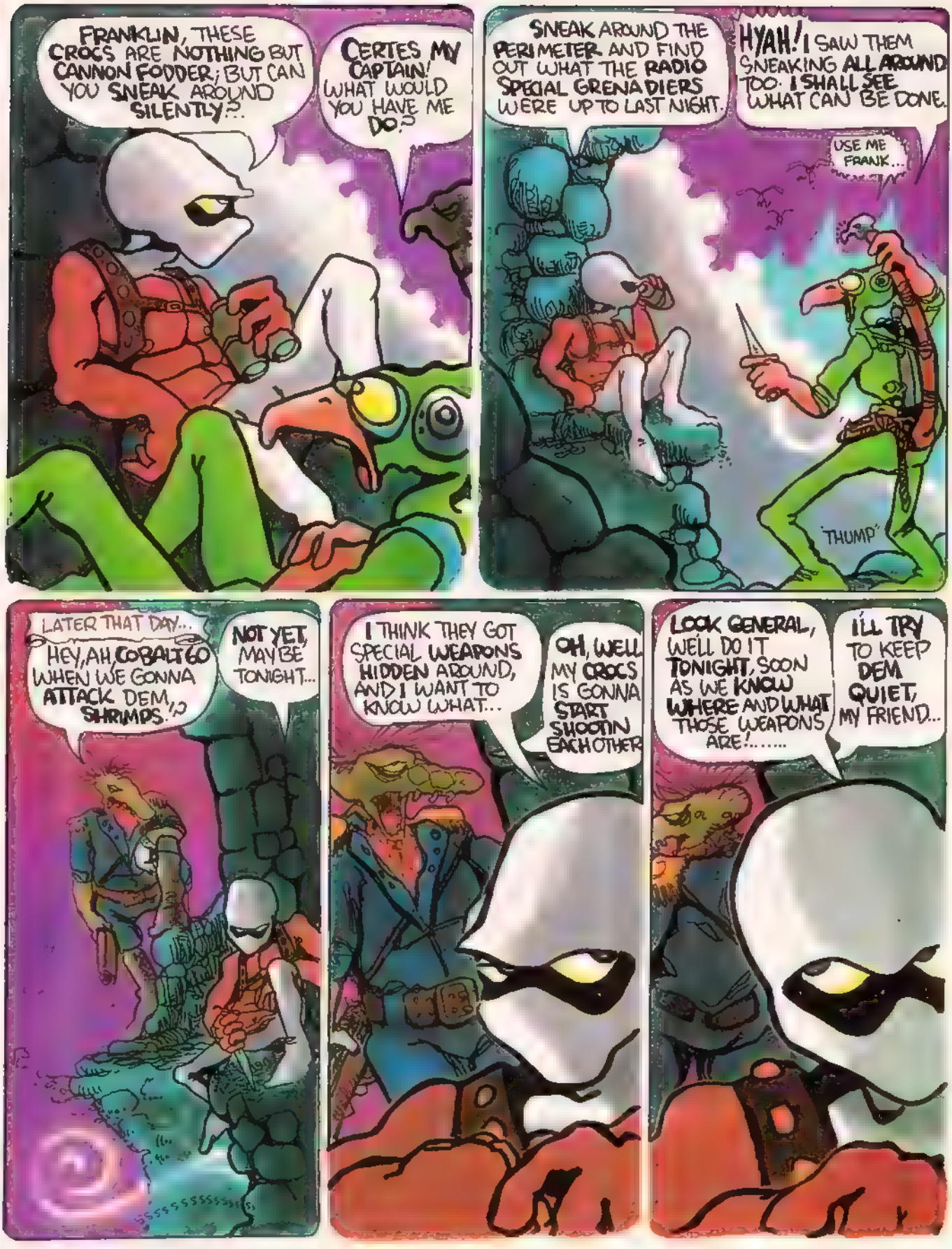
--URK--

WAA-CHAAAAA

...
I'D LIKE TO SETTLE MY BILL NOW, INKEEPER.
I'LL BE MOVING ON IN THE MORNING.
I HEAR THAT THERE MAY BE WORK FOR ME IN YAMATO PROVINCE.
SNIK

COBALT 60 (continued from page 33)

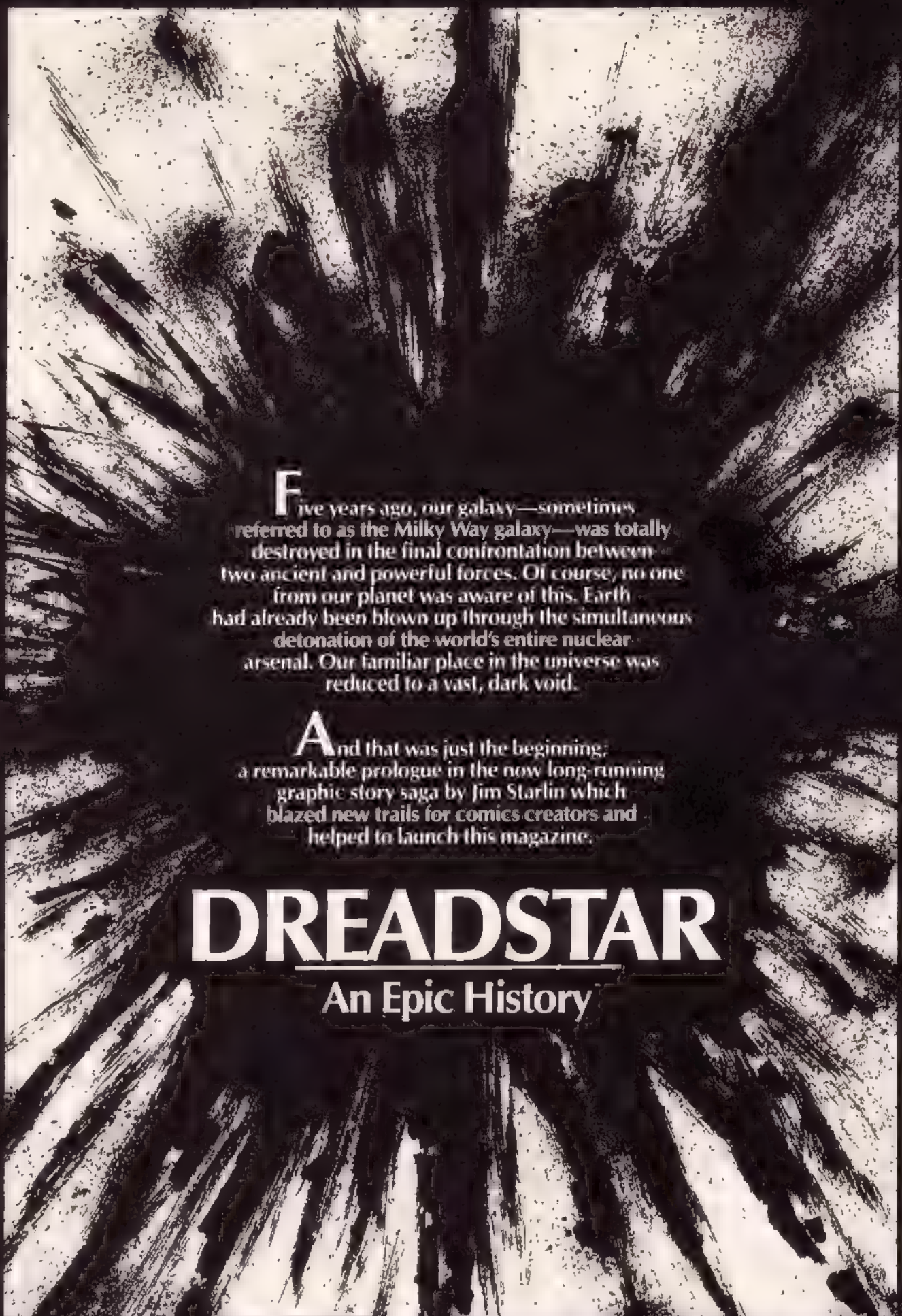
MISERABLE RADIOS... "COUGH"
THEY SEEM TO BE VERY BUSY DIGGING A BUNCH OF BIG HOLES...
I SEE POLONIUM 210 SWAGGERING AROUND WITH..A DWARF GOOD GENOCIDE!
THAT'S STRONTIUM 90! WHAT'S THAT CREEP DOING HERE!!
AND THERE'S THE BIGEYES, HAIL, HAIL THE GANGS ALL HERE!


FRANKLIN, THESE CROCS ARE NOTHING BUT CANNON FODDER; BUT CAN YOU SNEAK AROUND SILENTLY?..
CERTES MY CAPTAIN! WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO?
SNEAK AROUND THE PERIMETER AND FIND OUT WHAT THE RADIO SPECIAL GRENADIERS WERE UP TO LAST NIGHT.
HYAH! I SAW THEM SNEAKING ALL AROUND TOO. I SHALL SEE WHAT CAN BE DONE.
USE ME FRANK...
'THUMP'
LATER THAT DAY...
HEY, AH, COBALT 60 WHEN WE GONNA ATTACK DEM, SHRIMPS.?
NOT YET, MAYBE TONIGHT...
I THINK THEY GOT SPECIAL WEAPONS HIDDEN AROUND, AND I WANT TO KNOW WHAT...
OH, WELL MY CROCS IS GONNA START SHOOTIN EACH OTHER
LOOK GENERAL, WE'LL DO IT TONIGHT, SOON AS WE KNOW WHERE AND WHAT THOSE WEAPONS ARE!.....
I'LL TRY TO KEEP DEM QUIET, MY FRIEND...

PUNT!
MARK BODE '89
GNAAA

I'M SORRY I'M LATE BUT THOSE RADIOS HAD TO BE DELT WITH! THEY WERE PLAYING WITH PRIMITIVE BATTLE FIELD LASERS... SO I KILLED THEM, ALL 3 TEAMS OF 4.
A FEW LESS RADIOS TO WORRY ABOUT...
CERTES, NOW MAY I SUGGEST THAT THIS IS OUR MOST PROPITIOUS TIME TO MOVE AND PLUNDER, THESE MOST STUPID SCAVENGERS.
I DISABLED DA WEAPONS I THINK, BUT IT WOULD BE BEST TO MOVE BEFORE THE RADIOS FIND THEY'RE ACE OUT OF DA HOLE...
HISSTRY TELL YOUR CROCS THE FOOD'S ON!
THE RED FLARE SIGNALS WE ATTACK...
MOMMA SOON I SHALL HAVE REVENGE FOR YOU AND OLD MOG... "SIGH"

COBALT 60 continues next issue

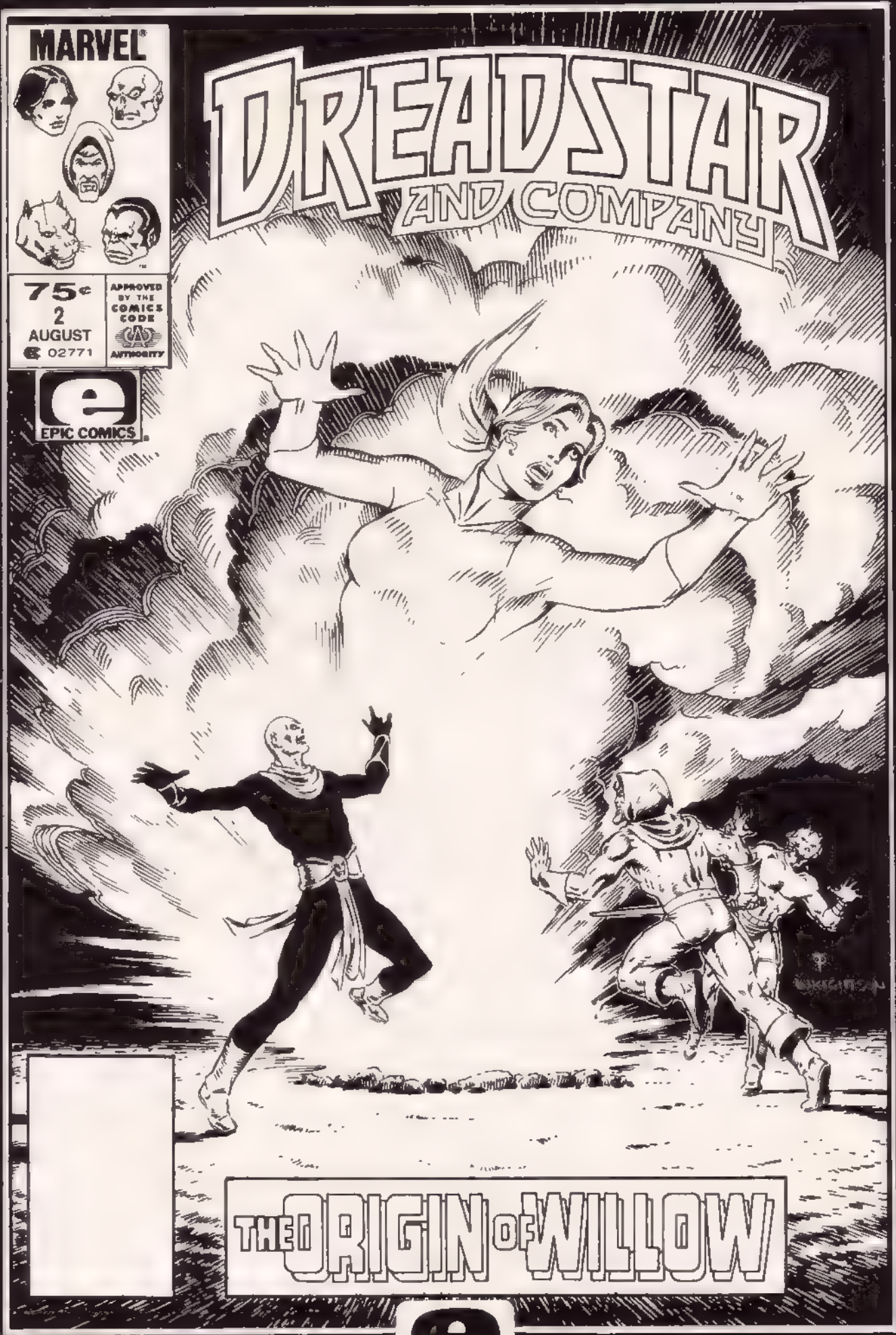

Five years ago, our galaxy—sometimes referred to as the Milky Way galaxy—was totally destroyed in the final confrontation between two ancient and powerful forces. Of course, no one from our planet was aware of this. Earth had already been blown up through the simultaneous detonation of the world's entire nuclear arsenal. Our familiar place in the universe was reduced to a vast, dark void.
And that was just the beginning: a remarkable prologue in the now long-running graphic story saga by Jim Starlin which blazed new trails for comics creators and helped to launch this magazine.
DREADSTAR
An Epic History

DREADSTAR TM & © 1985 Jim Starlin

A memorable quote from the Vietnam War, "In order to save the village, we had to destroy it," taken to cosmic proportions, becomes a major theme of *Metamorphosis Odyssey*, the fourteen chapter story which provided *Epic Illustrated* with its first continuing feature (in issues one through nine) and which introduced Starlin's main character, Vanth Dreadstar. Vanth, warrior and wielder of the almost mystic power sword, was selected by Aknaton, last survivor of the ancient planet of Orsiros, as protector of those who would use the Orsirosians' greatest weapon, the Infinity Horn. Its sounding saved the galaxy from Aknaton's millennia-old enemies, the Zygoteans. Saved it...by destroying it. Vanth was also saved, but left with the legacy—and the burden—of preventing a similar end from coming to a new galaxy. Starlin's next part of the saga, *The Price*, originally a one-issue black-and-white magazine from Eclipse Publications and redone last year by Epic as a full color *Dreadstar Annual*, was the origin of Syzygy Darklock, renegade priest turned wizard, who, in the Marvel Graphic Novel, *Dreadstar*, became Vanth's companion and advisor. The novel detailed Vanth's marriage and his attempt to live in peace as a farmer on the planet, Caldor, home of the docile cat people. But, as in the old galaxy, two factions were at war in this one, the Monarchy and the Instrumentality. Inevitably, that war found Dreadstar, forcing him to assume the burden he hoped to avoid: fighting to save this galaxy from the ultimate fate which took the last.

Though they stand as individual stories, *Metamorphosis Odyssey*, *The Price*, and the *Dreadstar* graphic novel, all provide essential background for a more major part of the saga, one that is still being told in the on-going bi-monthly Epic Comic edition of *Dreadstar*, now in its third year. In this book, Vanth is actively engaged in trying to change his new galaxy's rush toward destruction. Along with Syzygy, he is joined by Oedi, last of the cat people from the planet Dreadstar used as home; Willow, a blind telepath (introduced in a special story that appeared in *Epic Illustrated #15*); Skeevo Phlatus, smuggler and professional scrounge; and Doc Delphi, the outlaw group's physician. The main storyline has seen Vanth trying to maintain the balance of power by aiding the Monarchy, a weaker evil, against the greater force of the Instrumentality—particularly as personified by its Lord High Papal—and finding new aspects of his own nature when this plan fails because of unexpected intrigues within the Monarchy. Later issues focus on his more personal battles with the Lord High Papal and his aides. But the strength of the saga comes from the elaborate tapestry it is able to weave as an on-going title. Unlike many comics, *Dreadstar* is a story moving toward a definite end—some time distant, to be sure—allowing greater progression and changes along the way, letting Starlin examine his characters in depth, such as the abuse Willow suffered as a child (below) or the lonely, disaffected life that molded the Lord High Papal into the cold, powerful being that he is.

Of any new comics creation in the last few years, *Dreadstar* has been one of the most versatile, appearing with consistency and quality in every kind of new graphic story package as it became available. When Marvel's editor-in-chief, Jim Shooter, opened the way for a graphic novel line, Starlin had *Dreadstar* in the works (when the decision was made that the first should be a Marvel character, Starlin was ready to do that too, delivering the best selling *Death of Captain Marvel*). Having once worked together, Shooter and Starlin then began exploring the possibility of creator-owned and Marvel-published continuing comics. From that grew the *Epic Comics* line of deluxe comics sold exclusively in comics specialty shops with *Dreadstar* as the first title. In each format, *Dreadstar* has been successful, no small testament to Starlin's writing, drawing, and storytelling abilities. Still, he doesn't do it *entirely* himself (though he can when time permits). Since the bi-monthly *Epic* comic began, he's worked with such colorists as Glynis Oliver, Daina Graziunas, and Christie Scheele. Jim Novak is his regular letterer, and, since issue #5, his penciling has had remarkable inking by Allen Milgrom, Josef Rubenstein, Kim DeMulder, and currently, Sam De La Rosa (and occasionally, Starlin himself). Once in a while, he's also been known to take a suggestion or two from his editor, Jo Duffy. Now, with *Dreadstar* in its fifth year, it has just become the first creator-owned comic to appear in two versions. For those who came in late, Epic has begun reprinting the deluxe format *Dreadstar* material in a regular newsstand comic entitled *Dreadstar and Company*. Published monthly, it's available anywhere comics are sold. The second issue (cover on the right, with inking by Berni Wrightson) is on sale now. It's another format and another world for *Dreadstar* to conquer. But when you've survived five years after your galaxy explodes, what's another world?


MARVEL
DREADSTAR
AND COMPANY
75¢
2
AUGUST
02771
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
EPIC COMICS
THE ORIGIN OF WILLOW

Dear Stan and Archie,

In #28's **Feedback, Rick Obermeyer** levels some generally justified and interesting criticisms at letters published in **Epic**. I think that one basic reason for the "itemized" approach is a desire to deal with all the contents of an issue, combined with a realization that there is a very limited space in which to do it. However, you end your reply by saying that postal regulations are not "a natural inclination to tedium" cause you to publish your circulation figures. Well, I for one, find those figures quite interesting taken in view of other publications' figures and in the context of previous years. They are an objective insight the popularity (not quality) of a mag—though not the only measure of popularity. Other facts come to light too. For instance, over the past few years I've noticed that despite the proliferation of comics specialty shops, for virtually all comic books the percentage of copies obtained via subscription is steadily increasing.

The brevity of the **Galactus** installments seems to have generated a fair amount of protest and comment. You make a good point that the series' creators cannot provide any higher output, given their other commitments. But if you wanted to have longer installments, why not just save up the work as it comes in until you had enough to run, say, twelve pages per issue without having to skip an issue before the series would be completed?

And speaking about Galactus, I am quite interested to see how (or if) this series resolves the matter of just what Galactus is and how he should be dealt with—intellectually, emotionally, and practically. Recently, we have been told that he should be viewed as a kind of elemental "force of nature" in the universal scheme of things. Well, all right (maybe). But this was then extended to say that we should not try to stop him consuming worlds (even though the strong possibility exists that he will again munch up an inhabited world—and what of all those uninhabited worlds that will no longer have the chance to develop intelligent life?) Just because the natural order of things is to have foxes eat rabbits, it doesn't mean that the rabbits should lie down and let the foxes eat them. Paradoxically, while using the "sanctity" of nature to justify letting Galactus go (and I am talking here of course of the recent incident with Reed Richards) (i.e.: that we should not oppose the "will" of nature), are we not putting ourselves above nature? For, as I said, if it is Galactus's natural imperative to consume us, is it not our natural duty to resist? Who are we to presume to think we know better than nature (in this line of thought)?

I enjoyed **Cobalt 60** very much this issue—which is strange, because it left me cold last issue. I think the prose summary at the start of the episode helped put things in context for me so I could better understand what was going on.

T. M. Maple
Weston, Ont., Canada

***T. M.*, we don't think any of Galactus's supporters advocate just sitting down themselves and passively being eaten. It is, as you say, the nature and the right of the rabbit to defend itself as best it can from the fox. However, does that justify outsiders taking up arms against the fox in defense of the rabbits? Do hunters protect the weak from the strong, or do they destroy nature's balance? We're not sure we know. We're also not sure we'd let Galactus eat anyone, no matter who said so. All we know is, it's lunchtime, and we're hungry, so excuse us.**

Dear Stan and Archie,

Once again a new **Epic** and once again that ol' *deja vu* sensation as I flick through your magazine. Although your standard of story is still generally higher than **Heavy Metal**, I felt that you too have become caught in the science-fiction and fantasy trap. Every month we are presented with the next installments of whichever sprawling out of control epic you are running at the time, with the spare pages filled in with a hotch-potch of twist/gag-ending stories and articles/ads for upcoming **Marvel** projects.

Aside from the offensive commercialism of promoting your own products under the guise of "preview", I feel you have limited yourself with a policy of established artists and "safe" subject matter.

There is more than enough science-fiction in **Epic**, and there are more than enough big names. What is needed, not just in your magazine, but in the comics field in general, is a break from the traditions and a movement into new territory. If you are to reach "the next plateau" so rashly announced in your first issue, you must at least experiment. Although I feel that the subtitle of science-fiction and fantasy is too restricting a qualification to place on your creators, surely with a little imagination, fantasy in comics can come to mean something more than half naked barbarians grimly hacking away at each other's vital organs. But this aside, would it really hurt your audience to read a couple of stories that do not deal with death on a cosmic scale or end with cute one-liners that are used to disguise good artists with trash scripts. How about one or two stories about people doing people things.

I can see no reason why a man like **Bill Sienkiewicz** (admittedly a man with extraordinary, albeit wasted, talent) should not be able to produce a moving and powerful story that does not rely on guns for its drama but on the genuine drama of a well-conceived plot. But here lies another major fault of the magazine. You have no writers. Ah, yes, you have people who can rehash old **Journey into Mystery** strips, but these people are copying people who couldn't write in the first place. Try exercising as much control over your scripts as you obviously do in selecting your artwork. For instance take **Training Cycle** in **Epic #28**, a story for which you broke your big name rule, a story with very pretty pictures, but a story without any meaning, with no thought, did nothing but perpetuate the semi-gag last line approach that is being used as the formula for almost all the short-story science-fiction/fantasy being produced in comics today. Even the two best creators in #28, **Dave Sim** and **Rich Veitch** both come along wiith a cop-out plot. If you can't think how to finish a story then you damn well shouldn't start it.

I feel that if you were to change your policies regarding subject matter and the use of established professionals then new blood could leak in, bringing new oxygen to the fading brain cells that continue to regurgitate the same ideas month after month. Your readership may notice the change. Other people (non-comics fans!) might just read it. And one day you could, possibly, have an adult comic on your hands.

Andrew Moreton
Sheffield 8, England

***Andrew*, just for the record, *Bill Sienkiewicz* is at work right now developing two projects for us, a full color short story for *Epic Illustrated* and a series proposal for our *Epic* comics. He's also working on a comics series for us with one of the most popular writers in the business. (We'll be making announcements about these projects in the near**

future.) However, we note that after eloquently indicting us for not using what you consider good writers on our stories, or exercising sufficient control over the writing that artists submit to us, you then request stories from a man who, while he is one of the most talented illustrators we've ever met, is an almost totally untried quantity as a writer.

Dear Stan and Archie,

I really enjoy **Epic** quite a bit. I just have one suggestion. Could you possibly make the installments of **The Last Galactus Story** a little shorter?

At six pages a shot, the chapters are just too long for me to take in one sitting. Maybe you could cut them down to two or three pages. After all, how much great artwork and fantastic coloring can the readers of **Epic** take?

So, what do you stay—lets try to get **The Last Galactus Story** appearing in shorter installments in the future. I think it would be easier on everyone that way.

Barry Dutter
Scotch Plains, NJ

Cheap, *Barry*. Very cheap. And after all we've done for you. How sharper than a serpent's tooth, to have a thankless fan.

Dear Stan and Archie,

I recently discovered **Epic Illustrated,** and fell in love with your magazine. I am now getting a subscription and thought while I'm at it, I might as well write and tell you what a good job you are doing. Looking over my recently acquired back issues, I can see you have always been a magazine of high standards, providing good entertainment, inspired artwork and brilliant stories. The February 85 issue is no exception. A few comments:

Training Cycle was a joy to behold. The story was fair, but the artwork was incredible. If **Steve Sabella** offers anything else to you, grab it up!

Toadswart continues to be a joy to behold, as well as an intriguing tale. I enjoy stories about the fall of powerful and madmen. That's why I liked **The Sacred and the Profane,** and that's why I like **Toadswart. Tim A. Conrad** makes every step plain, so we can see every folly of Waxworth, and we can see how we are being led down the road to doom and destruction. The art complements the story perfectly, and the pages seem to be alive with malice, gloom and despair. My only complaint is the shortness of this installment.

A Friendly Reminder. It was nice to see the little ornery aardvark again, but I feel a little disappointed in that it seemed like a three page long one-liner. The previous one, **His First Fifth,** was funny, not just at the end, but all through. It had the kind of humor one expects from **Dave Sim**. But **Reminder** was a gag, a joke starring Cerebus, rather than a funny Cerebus story. Not what I expected. Still, it's better than nothing. Get more Cerebus stories even if you have to chain **Sim** and **Gerhard** to a drawing board.

Cobalt 60 is becoming quite interesting. I'm looking forward to the continuing and expanding story. This looks like it has the potential to become a regular series instead of just ending after several installments, although I doubt it could make it in its own comic.

And now I turn to the one thing you are probably going to get the most mail on, **The Last Galactus Story.** First, I agree with almost everybody that the story is spread out too long and the installments are too short. I understand that **John Byrne** and **Terry Austin** are too busy to work any harder on it, but you could have waited until they had done enough to put it out. I would not have minded twelve pages every two issues. Although I don't feel as strongly about it as **Al Norris,** I do feel a little cheated. I also must agree with **Kathy Li** when she says "it doesn't fit in **Epic.**" She's right, **The Last Galactus Story** should be in a regular comic format, rather than **Epic.** Both the story and the art could be presented just as well in a regular comic, perhaps even better. However, as long as it's in **Epic,** I'll get **Epic** because of it. So will a lot of other people, too. (Incidentally, it was a crime to put **Bill Sienkiewicz's** name on the cover when his art was only in the **Dune** adaptation you previewed.)

I spite of a few faults, this is still a great magazine. Hey, any magazine that launched **Starlin's Metamorphosis Odyssey** can't be too bad.

Eddie Maise
Atlanta, Georgia

We hope this issue's *Cerebus* stories are to your taste, *Eddie*. Admittedly, both have gag endings, but we find them to be very truthful and perceptive, as well as funny. And, in just one or two more issues, we'll be running a gallery of full color Cerebus pin-ups by *Dave Sim* and *Gerhard*.

Dear Stan and Archie,

My name is **Roger L. Lane, CPL U.S.M.C.** I've been reading **Epic** for quite a while now, it's hands down the best fantasy sci-fi magazine in print. I'm writing about an article I read in the **Feedback** column of your Feb. 85 issue, sent in by **David Gaston** of New York.

I'd all but completely forgotten about sitting in front of the TV and watching, what I considered at the time, "a little kids show" (**Starblazers, Spacer Cruiser Yamato,** or whatever other name it has.) That was five or six years ago!!

That is until I picked up an Aug. 84 issue of **Epic,** and then reading **David G's** letter, all the Wave Motion guns and Gamalons started dancing around in my head, refreshing my memory of sitting there waiting for my ride to school. I realize now how very engrossed I was with that show.

Unfortunately, I haven't seen it on any station since those younger school days.

I agree with what **Dave** had to say with the show, however, I would rather see the cartoon come back into circulation. On the other hand, the live action movie would be, "an awesome force to contend with". But for me I believe the cartoon will always be tops.

Hurry, **Starblazers,** there aren't many days to save the human race.

Dragonslander was great!! Please keep publishing that good stuff in the future.

Roger L. Lane
Centralia, WA

No fear, *Roger,* we have several more jobs by both *Rob Rodi* and *Kent Williams* in our inventory, to appear over the next several issues. As for when the next *Wotatease* story, or any other *Rodi/Williams* collaboration will be, though, your guess is as good as ours.

By the way, we'd like to apologize to our readers for any confusion they may have experienced while reading *Treasure Hunt*. Due to an error made at the printers, part of the dialogue was omitted from the middle of the story.

If you have letters or comments you'd like to see in these pages, please address them to:

FEEDBACK
Epic Illustrated
c/o Marvel Comics Group
387 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

THE MARVEL GRAPHIC NOVEL
BY ALAN ZELENETZ & CHARLES VESS

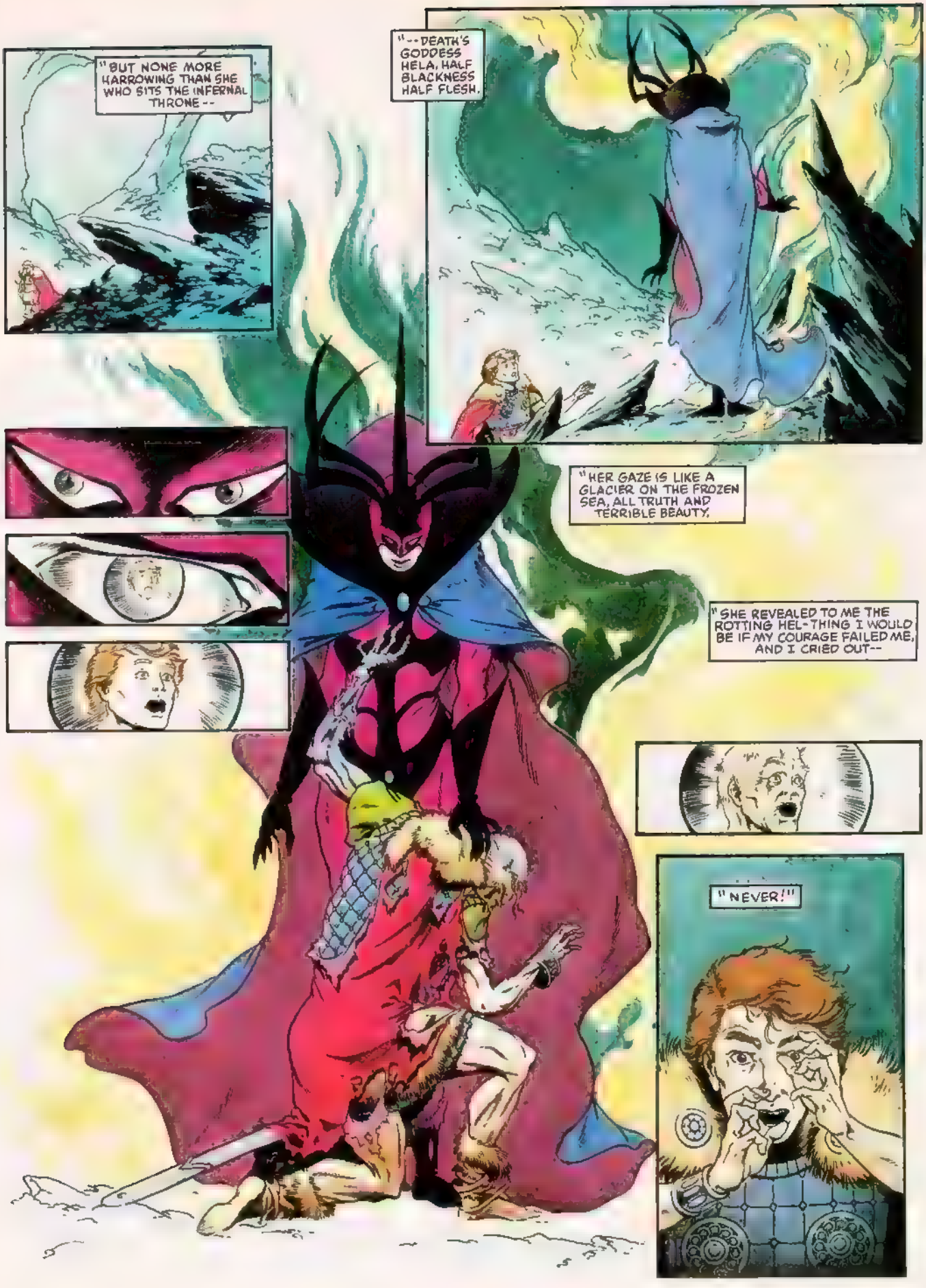
story by Alan Zelenetz/artwork by Charles Vess
© 1985 Marvel Comics Group

LOOK FOR GRIM MAGNUS IN THE VANGUARD. THAT WAS EVER HIS PLACE IN THE VIGOR OF LIFE.
NAY. HERE AM I, ALONE ON THIS CRAG, ALOOF FROM THE ROISTEROUS BATTLE-PLAY.
FOR I HAVE NO WILL TO REJOICE AND JOIN N ARMS...
...KNOWING THAT I LEFT BEHIND ME IN THE LAND OF THE LIVING A SON OF FAINT HEART.
GREYVAL, I KNOW ALL THAT PASSED AFTER MY SOUL FLED LIFE.
MY SPIRIT SAW YOU DANCE AMONG THE TROLLS.
HOW COULD YOU BETRAY US SO?

WHAT POET WILL EVER RAISE HIS HARP TO SING MY SON'S DEEDS HERE IN ODIN'S SHIELD-ROOFED HALL?
FATHER...
...GIVE ME YOUR COUNSEL AND FORGIVENESS, AND I WILL WIN FAME'S UNDYING GLORY.
AT LAST MY HEART SOARS!
AYE, YET YOU MAY REDEEM YOURSELF, MY SON, MAYHAP BECOME THE GREATEST OF US ALL.
KNOW THIS --THE *NORNS* IN THEIR FOREST CAN UNRIDDLE WHERE THE RAVEN BANNER'S HID.
BUT FIRST YOU MUST SOJOURN IN *HEL*, THE DARKEST REALM OF ALL, BITTER COLD AND FULL OF HORROR.
THERE YOU'LL SEE THE WRETCHED FATE OF HOLLOW LIVES MISSPENT IN COWARDICE AND MEAN SPIRIT.
SUCH WILL BE *YOUR* SORROWFUL LOT IF YOU FAIL TO MAKE VALOR YOUR HARD-EDGED SWORD AND VIRTUE YOUR SHIELD.

"ALL ALONE I MOVED, A LIVING GHOST AMONG THE DEAD.
"I SAILED HEL'S STAGNANT RIVER, LOATHSOME AND FOUL AND FULL OF DROWNED SOULS LIKE A BROTH OF CORPSES.
"HERE THE AIR WAS DAMP WITH SLEET, THERE CUTTING COLD LIKE PINS OF ICE.
"I SHIVERED PAST THE SLAVERING HELLHOUND, GARM...
"...THROUGH SHADOW-HAUNTED CATACOMBS OF FLAME

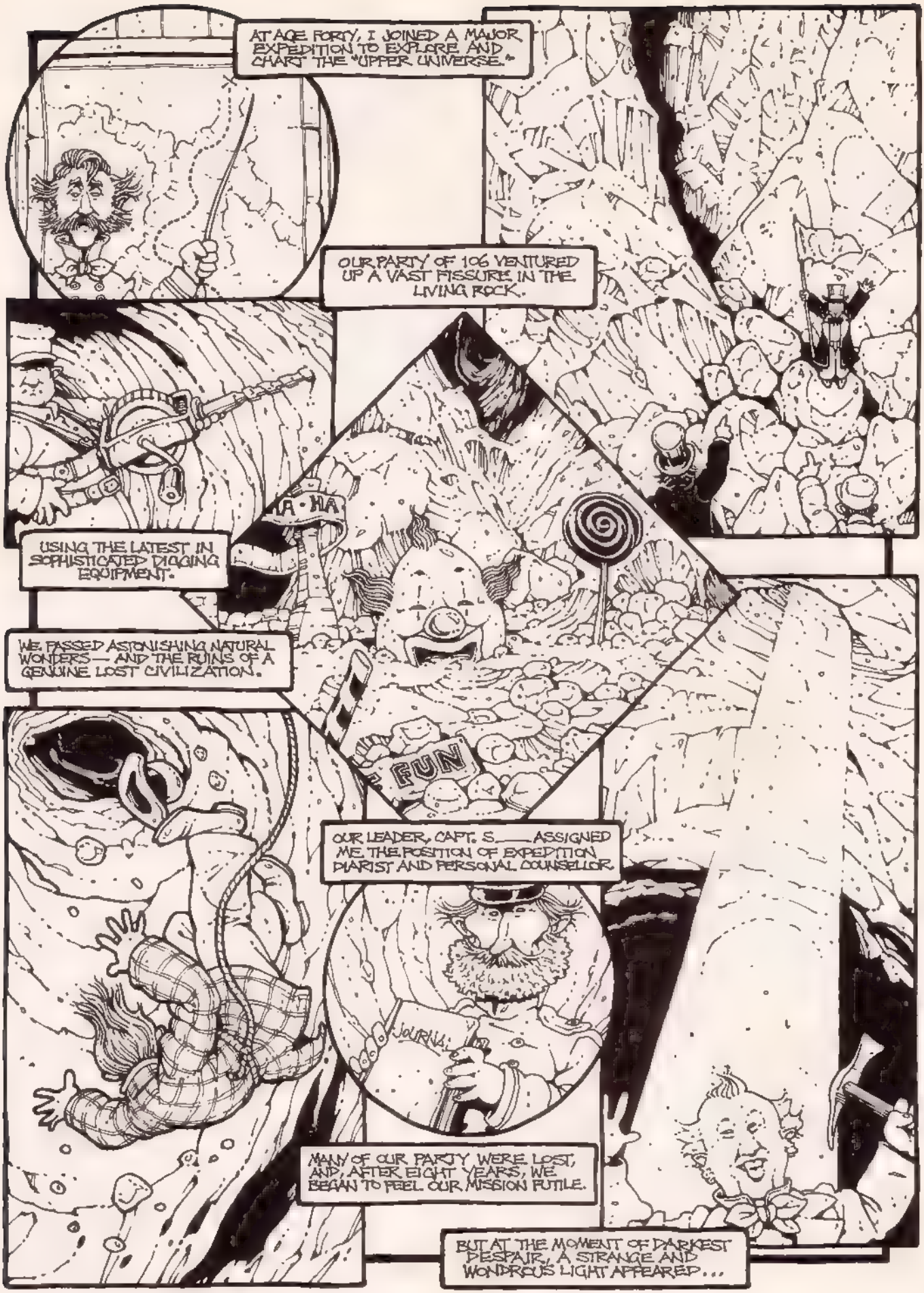
'ALONE I WALKED AMONG THE CRINGING DAMNED AND THE UNDREAMING DEAD WHO KNOW NO END OF TORMENTS, NO END OF DARKNESS...
"...THEIR EYES BLIND WITH BLOOD, THEIR NOSTRILS THICK WITH THE STENCH OF THE DEVOURING DRAGON.
"OH, THERE ARE HORRORS WITHOUT NAME IN THE DANK PITS OF HEL!

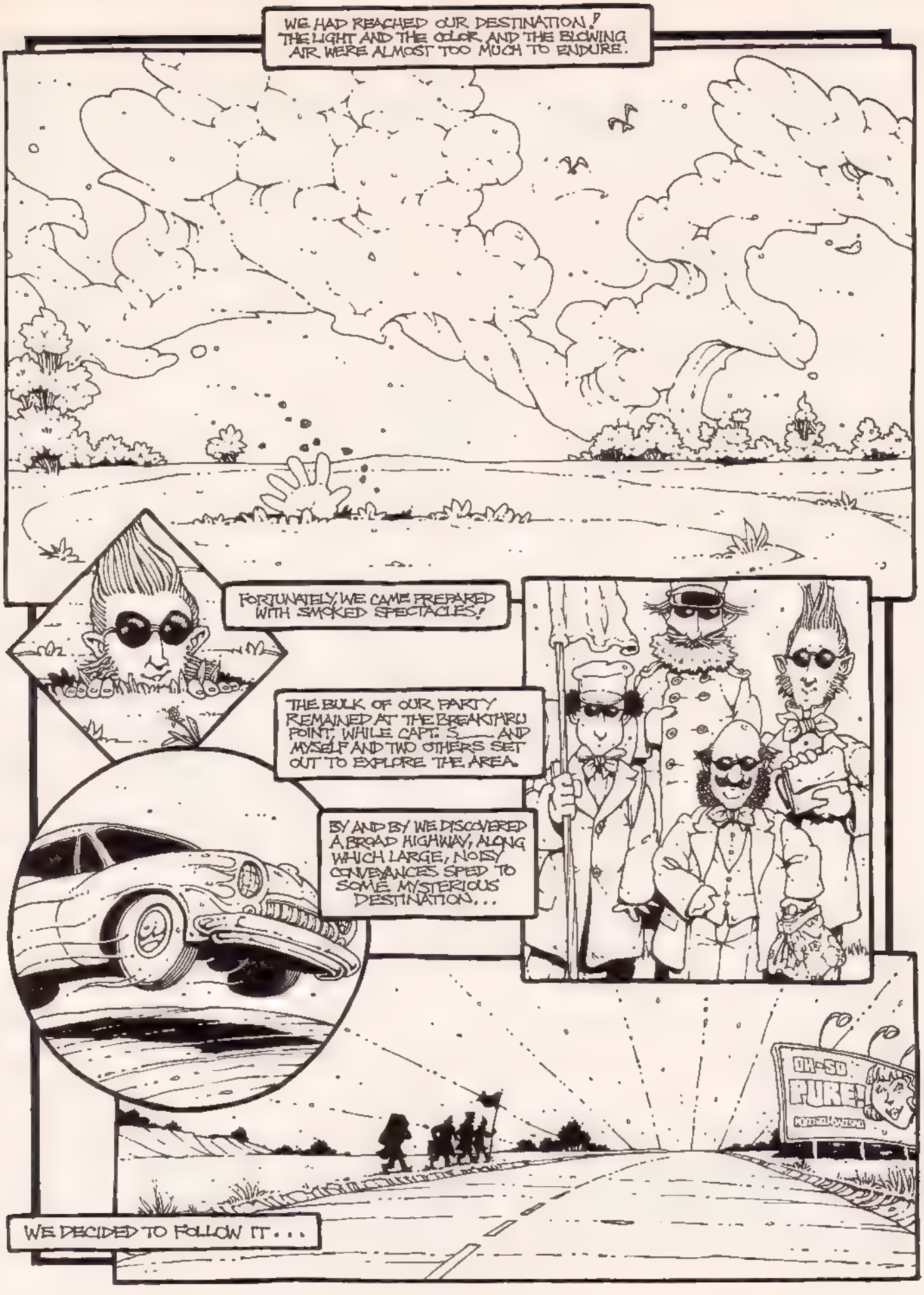

"BUT NONE MORE HARROWING THAN SHE WHO SITS THE INFERNAL THRONE--
"--DEATH'S GODDESS HELA, HALF BLACKNESS HALF FLESH.
"HER GAZE IS LIKE A GLACIER ON THE FROZEN SEA, ALL TRUTH AND TERRIBLE BEAUTY.
"SHE REVEALED TO ME THE ROTTING HEL-THING I WOULD BE IF MY COURAGE FAILED ME, AND I CRIED OUT--
"NEVER!"

NEVER!
I'VE SEEN ALL I WISH.
I SWEAR IT, BALDER, THE QUEEN OF HEL SHALL NEVER OWN MY SOUL.
I MUST STRAIGHTAWAY FIND THE NORNS AS MY FATHER BID.
FATE'S WEIRD SISTERS DWELL AT THE ROOTS OF THE WORLD TREE IN A FOREST BEYOND THE SEA OF MARMORA
LET'S HASTEN...
"...BUT NOT FORGET OUR COMPANION AT THE FAR END OF THE GOLDEN BRIDGE..."
DEAR, DEARY!
SPEAR-MAIDS WITH EYES OF FIRE CARRYING D D. DEAD WARRIORS--!
OH, DO ME NO HARM, VALKYRIE.
I'M BUT A POOR OTTER WITH THE LEAST LITTLE LEAST BIT OF PLUCK...
THOSE WERE SYGNET AND HER SWORD-SISTERS WHO PASSED OVER US NOW
WHY DID SHE NOT HAIL ME?
SYGNET WOULD NOT STAY THEE ONE MOMENT'S PASSING FROM THY COURSE.
GREYVAL, THE SHIELD-MAIDS BEAR HEROES NEWLY-SLAIN.
IT CAN ONLY MEAN THE GIANTS, EMBOLDENED BY THE RAVEN BANNER, HARRY ASGARD ANEW BEFORE A FINAL GRAND ASSAULT.
BLESS MY BOOTS, HERE YOU ARE, NOBLE SIRS!
AND I WAS JUST SAYING TO MYSELF, YOU KNOW, THINKING AND WONDERING OUT LOUD WHETHER AND WHEN WE MIGHT BE...
...LEAVING THESE PARTS?
AT ONCE, FOR TIME WAITS ON NO GOD.

JOURNEY TO
OUTER EARTH
RICK GEARY
©1984
MANY, MANY YEARS AGO, I MADE MY HOME IN THIS DARK, COLD, MISERABLE PLACE.
PEOPLE THERE WERE SULLEN AND LETHARGIC... TO RISE FROM BED OF A MORNING REQUIRED THE GREATEST EFFORT.
I TRIED TO MAKE A LIVING AS POET AND PHILOSOPHER, THO SUCH SERVICES WERE LITTLE IN DEMAND.
MY WIFE AND TWIN SONS WERE AS STRANGERS TO ME.
ALL MY LIFE, I HAD READ OF A LEGENDARY LAND FAR ABOVE...
A JOYOUS PLACE OF LIGHT, MOVEMENT AND INDUSTRY... THESE MYTHS, THO, WERE GIVEN LITTLE FACTUAL CREDENCE.

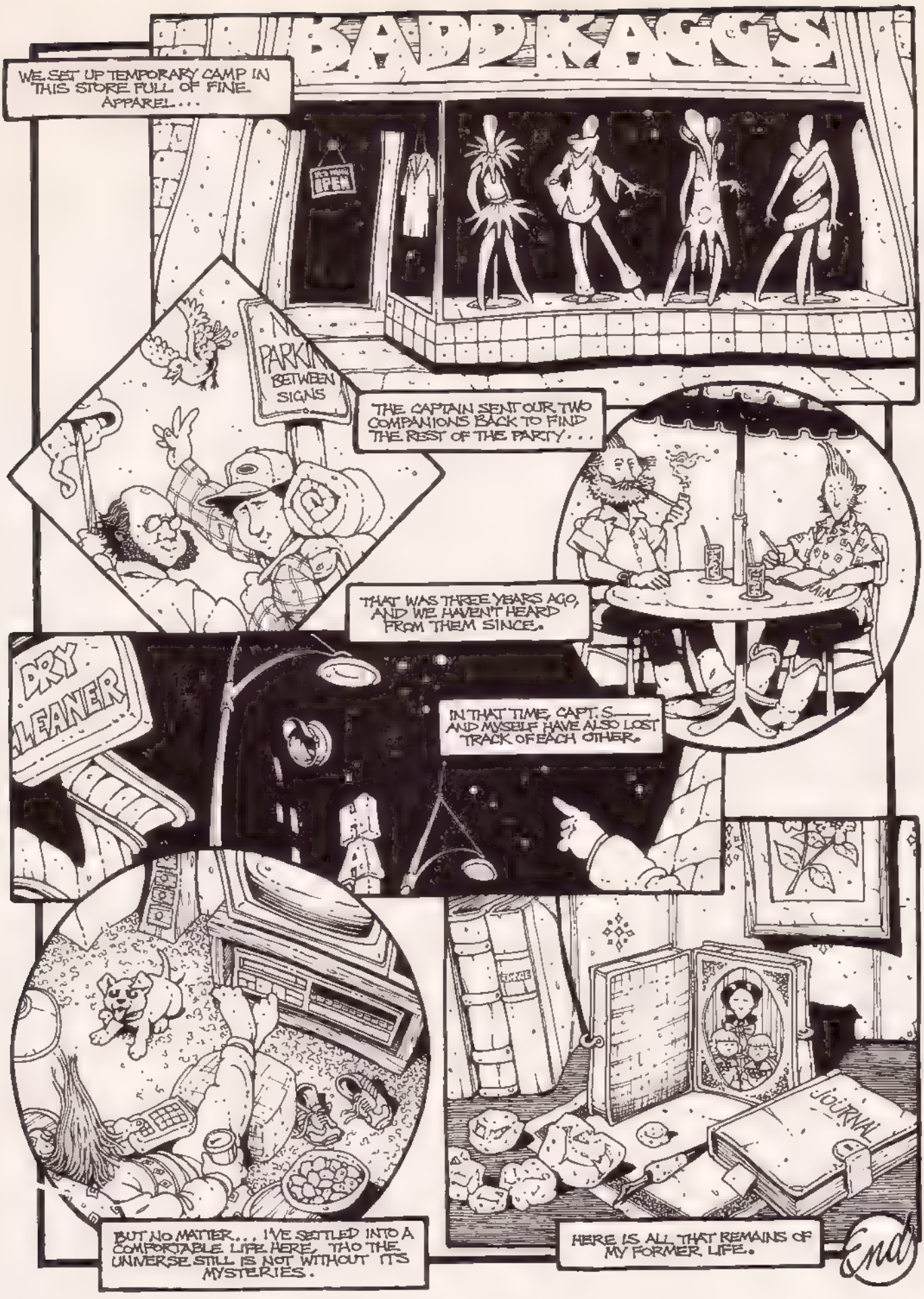
© 1985 Rick Geary


AT AGE FORTY, I JOINED A MAJOR EXPEDITION TO EXPLORE AND CHART THE "UPPER UNIVERSE."
OUR PARTY OF 106 VENTURED UP A VAST FISSURE IN THE LIVING ROCK.
USING THE LATEST IN SOPHISTICATED DIGGING EQUIPMENT.
HA-HA
WE PASSED ASTONISHING NATURAL WONDERS— AND THE RUINS OF A GENUINE LOST CIVILIZATION.
FUN
OUR LEADER, CAPT. S.—— ASSIGNED ME THE POSITION OF EXPEDITION DIARIST AND PERSONAL COUNSELLOR.
JOURNAL
MANY OF OUR PARTY WERE LOST, AND, AFTER EIGHT YEARS, WE BEGAN TO FEEL OUR MISSION FUTILE.
BUT AT THE MOMENT OF DARKEST DESPAIR, A STRANGE AND WONDROUS LIGHT APPEARED...


WE HAD REACHED OUR DESTINATION! THE LIGHT AND THE COLOR, AND THE BLOWING AIR, WERE ALMOST TOO MUCH TO ENDURE.
FORTUNATELY, WE CAME PREPARED WITH SMOKED SPECTACLES!
THE BULK OF OUR PARTY REMAINED AT THE BREAKTHRU POINT, WHILE CAPT. S____ AND MYSELF AND TWO OTHERS SET OUT TO EXPLORE THE AREA.
BY AND BY WE DISCOVERED A BROAD HIGHWAY, ALONG WHICH LARGE, NOISY CONVEYANCES SPED TO SOME MYSTERIOUS DESTINATION...
OH-SO PURE!
WE DECIDED TO FOLLOW IT...

AT LENGTH, WE CAME UPON A MAGNIFICENT CITY— OBVIOUSLY THE LEGENDARY PLACE OF WONDERS I HAD READ OF AS A YOUNG MAN.
ONUTS
SELF SERV
QUICK
PEOPLE WENT ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS WITH PACE AND EXHILARATION — THEY HARDLY NOTICED US.
LIFE WAS IN A CONSTANT STATE OF EXCITEMENT— ALL CITIZENS SHARING AN INTENSE SENSUAL INTIMACY.
ALL AROUND WERE LARGE-SCALE CONTESTS OF PHYSICAL PROWESS.
ENORMOUS COLORFUL BEASTS LEAPT AND CAPERED ABOUT THE STREETS.
IN SHORT ORDER WE WERE INTOXICATED BY THE RHYTHMS OF THE PLACE...

BADRAGS


WE SET UP TEMPORARY CAMP IN THIS STORE FULL OF FINE APPAREL...
NO MORE OPEN
NO PARKING BETWEEN SIGNS
THE CAPTAIN SENT OUR TWO COMPANIONS BACK TO FIND THE REST OF THE PARTY...
THAT WAS THREE YEARS AGO, AND WE HAVEN'T HEARD FROM THEM SINCE.
DRY CLEANER
IN THAT TIME, CAPT. S—— AND MYSELF HAVE ALSO LOST TRACK OF EACH OTHER.
BUT NO MATTER... I'VE SETTLED INTO A COMFORTABLE LIFE HERE, TH'O THE UNIVERSE STILL IS NOT WITHOUT ITS MYSTERIES.
JOURNAL
HERE IS ALL THAT REMAINS OF MY FORMER LIFE.
End

TOADSWART

SYNOPSIS

"What is this Darkness, this consummate Evil pervading all . . . the now forsaken castle chambers . . . the landscapes and villages beyond?" So in the year 982 A.D., from a lonely cell, contemplates the dwarf Toadswart, retainer of Castle Amplestone.

Had it commenced with the mysterious disappearance of the castle's old Lord? Certainly this affected his heir and regent, Prince Waxwroth. Suspecting the King of the First Dominion of treacherous designs upon Amplestone province, Waxwroth used wealth brutally wrung from his subjects to call upon Dark Forces and give life to a hideous creation . . . the Golem.

But while Waxwroth schemed, the King's army arrived — proof to the Prince that someone within Amplestone had betrayed him — and the Creature escaped. Not long after, Rupert, Waxwroth's young son — whose coming investiture would also validate the Prince as reigning Lord of Amplestone — went plunging to his doom from the castle's clock tower.

After his son's burial, Waxwroth issued two orders. One for Counselor Bitterburr to apprehend and bring to the castle's dungeon the suspected traitor . . . Lacknose, the old Lord's astrologer. The second order was for an attack on the King's encampment involving only Captain Flurry and three men . . . plus one *other* the Prince would provide.

AMPLESTONE

A GOTHIC TALE of HORROR & MAGICK

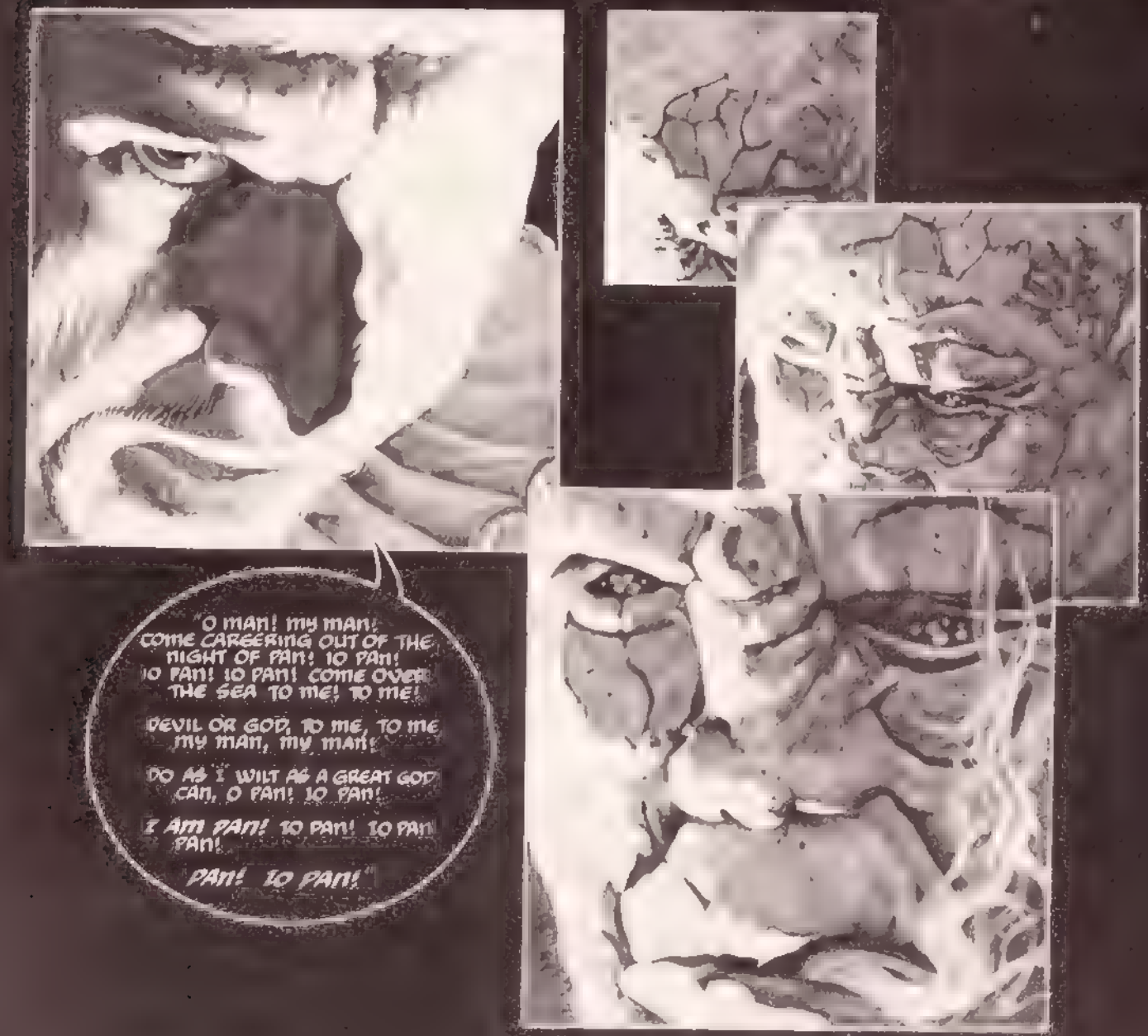
BY TIM A CONRAD

© 1984 Tim Conrad

As Bitterbur set to his Galling Task, I carried the lamp for Waxwroth...
...who plunged precipitously down the twisting, treacherous stairways to chambers deep and dark and long forgotten...
...where his recaptured [illegible] was now restrained in chains and spells.

The Prince's hand trembled as he worked the massive Iron Lock he had himself Forged and Rowed-Over. But he trembled not in Fear. He seemed not to be *shaking* as much as *being shaken*—as by some Awesome Power deep within himself now grown outward beyond any human form to contain.

Then, through Waxwroth's tremulous lips, I heard that Awful Presence speak:


"O MAN! MY MAN! COME CAREERING OUT OF THE NIGHT OF PAN! IO PAN! IO PAN! IO PAN! COME OVER THE SEA TO ME! TO ME!
DEVIL OR GOD, TO ME, TO ME MY MAN, MY MAN!
DO AS I WILT AS A GREAT GOD CAN, O PAN! IO PAN!
I AM PAN! IO PAN! IO PAN! PAN!
PAN! IO PAN!"

Once this Inconceivable Army had traversed the drawbridge, the Prince was away to the Dungeon... where the Gaoler seemed more distraught than the Prisoner.
...my BOND TO THE OLD LORD WAS TO SERVE THE OAK OF AMPLESTONE, NO MATTER THE MAN. NOW... MAXWROTH IS THE OAK! SO, DUTY HAS MADE ME FETCH YOU HERE, LACKNOSE... BUT I WAS NOT COMMANDED TO HOLD YOU! IF YOU'VE ANY POWERS TO FLEE...
PLEASE, BITTERBURR, OLD FRIEND, JEOPARDIZE NOTHING FOR MY SAKE.
I, TOO, AM BOUND BY PLEDGES--INTENDED AND OTHERWISE--AND THEY HAVE BROUGHT ME TO THIS PASS MORE SURELY THAN FOOL PRINCE AND LOYAL RETAINER.
PLEDGES, NO DOUBT, OF BETRAYAL AND TREASON MADE TO THE KING OF THE FIRST DOMINION, YOU WEAK-WILLED FAKER!
PLEDGES I INTEND TO CALL DUE!
NO PLEDGE IS CALLED, SAVE BY HE WHO MADE IT
THE HOUR APPROACHES, MY BOY, WHEN YOU WILL COME TO REALIZE THAT... THOUGH, BY THEN, IT WILL MOST LIKELY BE TOO LATE.

IT WILL CERTAINLY BE TOO LATE FOR YOU, TRAITOR!
YOUR TIME HAS COME NOW...
...AND SOON YOU WILL KNOW JUST HOW LONG AND HORRIBLY IT CAN BE MADE TO LINGER!
UMPH!

M'LORD, I BESEECH YOU! IN THE NAME OF YOUR FATHER-- IN MEMORY OF YOUR SON-- DO NOT
ENOUGH!
IT IS FOR THOSE VERY REASONS THAT I SHALL!
P'RHAPS NOW, PRINCE FOOL, YOU WILL HEAR WHAT I SAY.
AS YOU CHOOSE TO BIND ME TO YOUR POWER, SO ARE YOU BOUND TO MINE. YOU CANNOT IMPOSE THE ONE WITHOUT ENDURING THE OTHER. ACTIONS-AS EVERYTHING-- ARE CIRCULAR IN NATURE. WHAT IS THE BEGINNING BECOMES THE END-- THE ENDS ARE EVER--
UHHH!
'Twas quick and easy work for Waxwroth to restrain what offered no Resistance. Old Lackcose was summarily bound to the Rack. He went, if not entirely Willing, more than simply Resigned... almost, it seemed to me, Purposefully.
"Waxwroth jerked the ratchet three notches past tight.

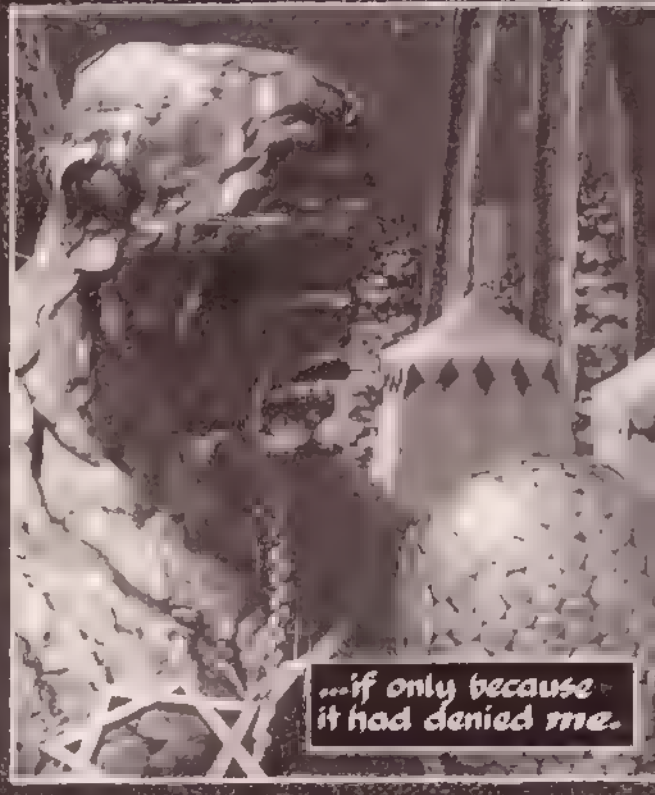
NO MORE, OLD MAN. NO MORE OF YOUR SENILE GIBBERINGS AND ESOTERIC CAVEATS. NO MORE DISRESPECT FOR MYSELF AND THE OAK OF AMPLESTONE. NO MORE DECEPTIONS AND INTERFERENCE AND TREASON, NO MORE MURDER! NO MORE... NO MORE...
TOADSWART! STOKE THE BRAZIER!
MILORD! WHAT CAN YOU HOPE TO OBTAIN FROM THIS INQUISITION?

"To my imminent Regret and Everlasting Shame, I obeyed.

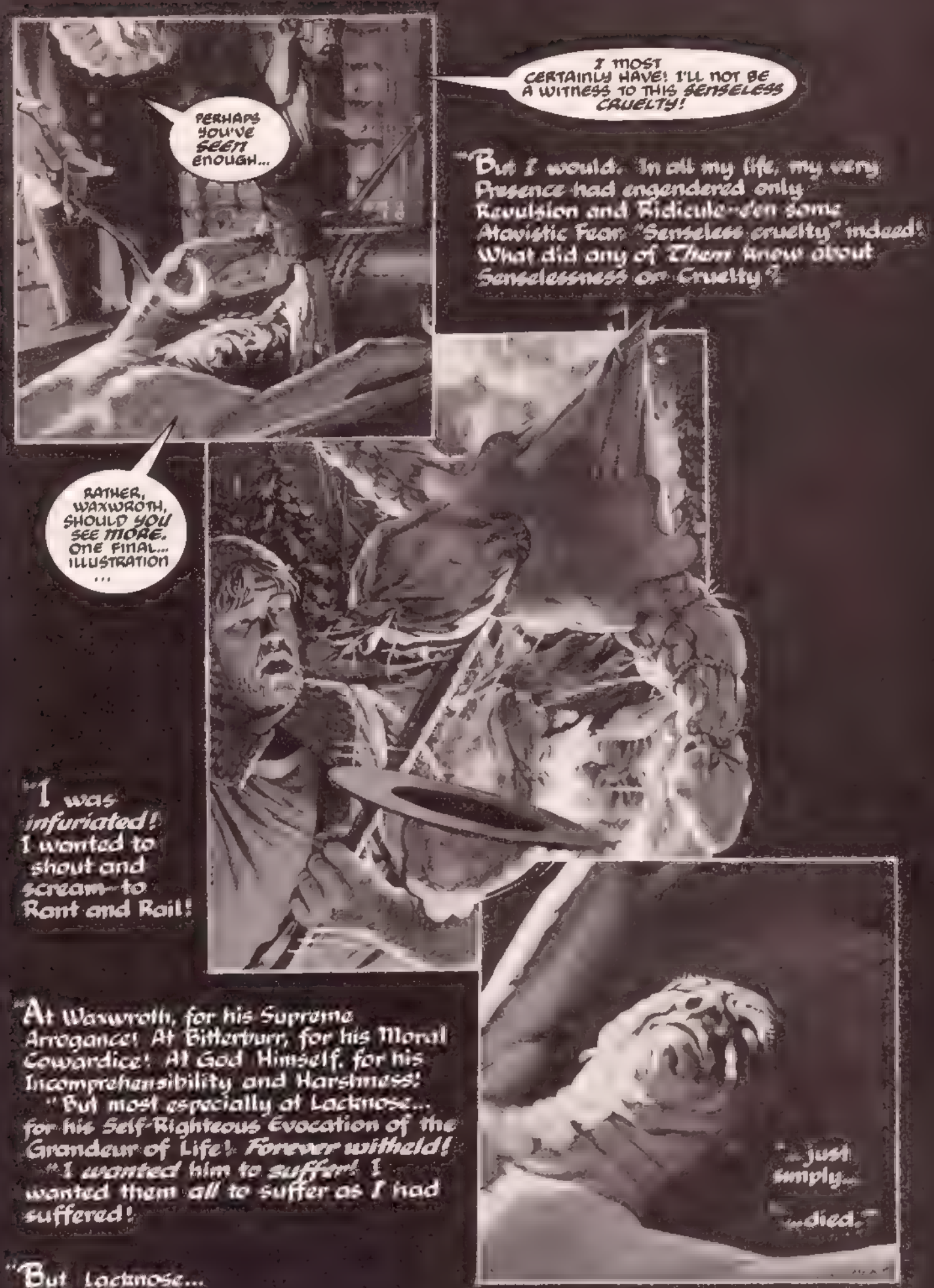
"Thirty-three years of Servitude—as much to the Inescapable Condition of my own Wretched Form as to the Manor which afforded it Protection—guided my hand to that Fire.

"Having never been treated as the Same, I had embraced my Difference. I was not one of Them. I was a being of Another Order. Their concerns were not my own. What matter to me how they chose to use and abuse one another?

"So I fanned the Flames—assuming, as ever, that my Detachment was Absolution. Not realizing—then—how this Self-Deception betrayed, in every sense, the very Humanity I had so long sought to Deny...



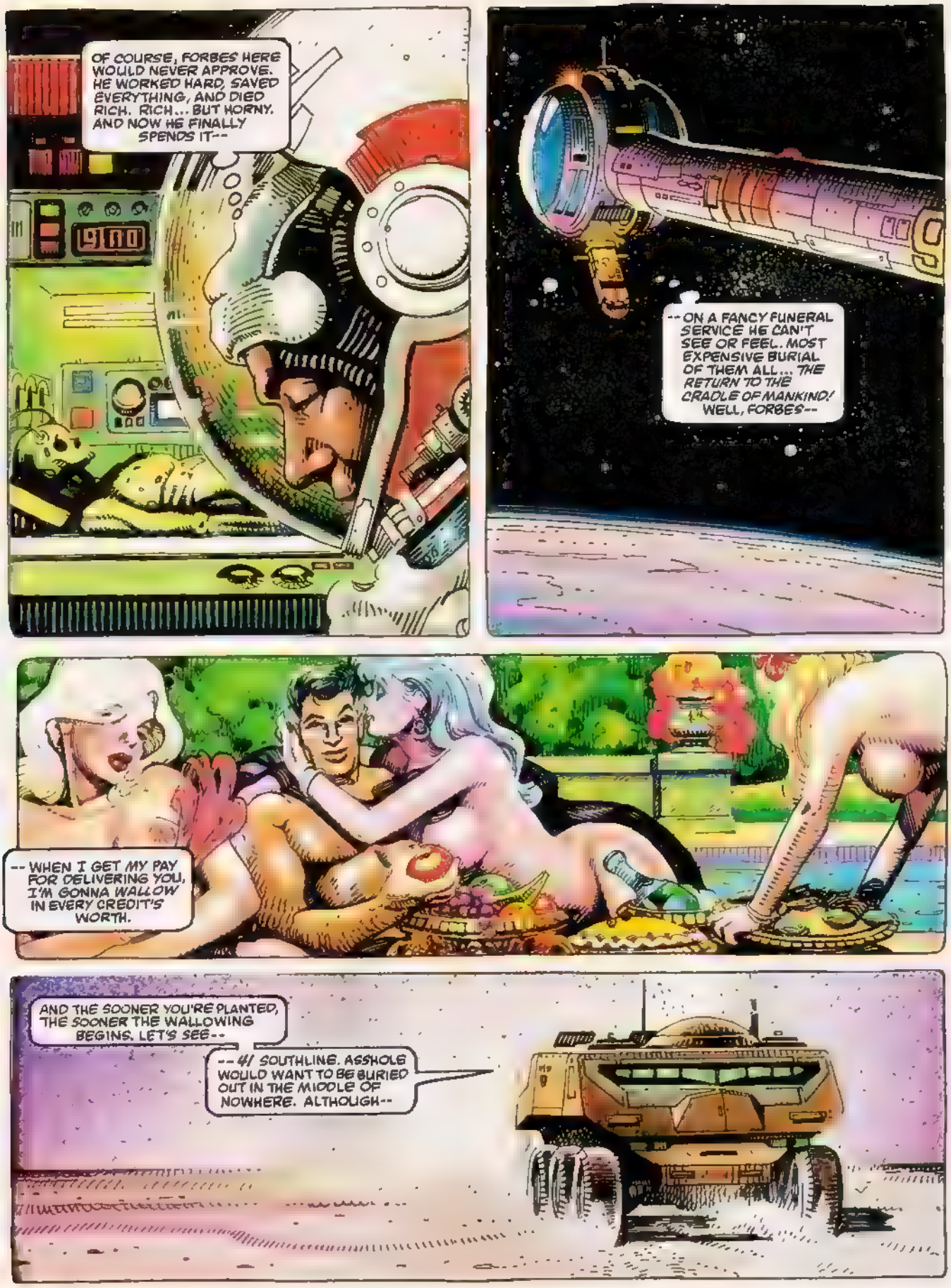
I SHALL OBTAIN, COUNSELOR, WHAT I DESIRE! INFORMATION! HOW LONG HAS THIS TREACHEROUS, MURDERING CHARLATAN BEEN SPYING FOR THE KING?
WHAT COWARDLY PART HAS HE PLAYED IN MY FATHER'S DISAPPEARANCE AND MY SON'S DEATH?, AND VENGEANCE?, OH, YES--I DESIRE VENGEANCE! THERE ARE THOSE OF LATE WHO'VE FORGOTTEN WHO IS LORD HERE--WHOSE WILL IS TO BE DONE!
CIRCLES, BOY YOU ILLUSTRATE MY POINT! YOU BEGIN WITH TRUTH...YOU END WITH TRUTH. A SHAME THE MIDDLE IS SO FULL OF IGNORANCE IT BLINDS YOU TO YOUR OWN VERACITIES!
HOHA
CIRCLES ARE TOO SMALL... STRIVING TO SATISFY YOUR OWN DESIRES, THINKINK YOURSELF TO BE THE PINNACLE, A BEING WHO CAN CREATE, MAKE THINGS HAPPEN... UNAWARE HOW THAT LIMITS WHAT YOU CAN BECOME TO ONLY WHAT YOU CAN DESIRE.
LIFE--WHICH YOU RESENT BECAUSE YOU THINK IT ENDS WITH DEATH, WHICH YOU FEAR--IS SO MUCH GRANDER THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE. BUT YOU MUST LET IT HAPPEN. WE CALL IT FAITH... SEEING THE CIRCLES BEYOND YOUR OWN.

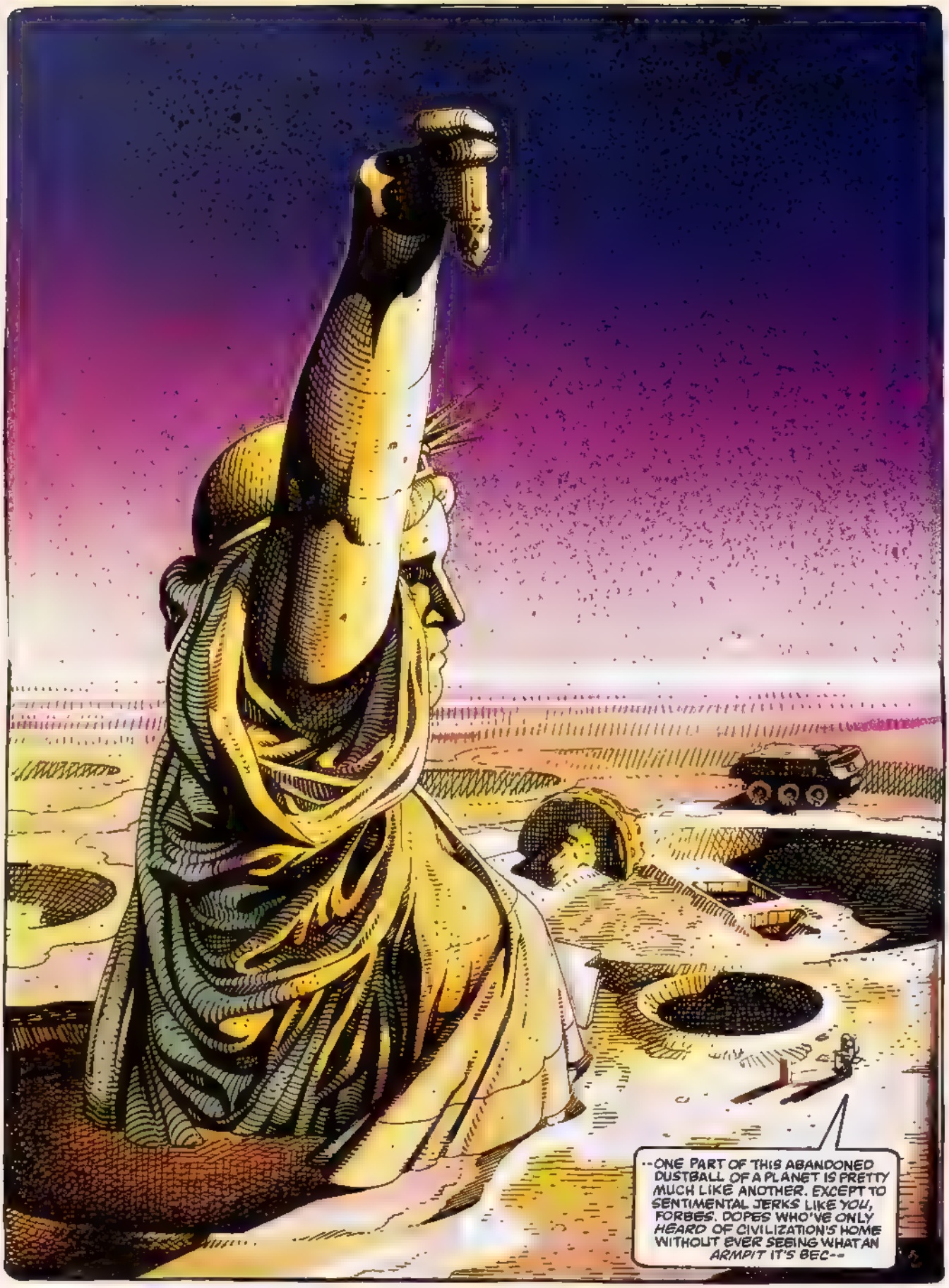

PERHAPS YOU'VE SEEN ENOUGH...
I MOST CERTAINLY HAVE! I'LL NOT BE A WITNESS TO THIS SENSELESS CRUELTY!
"But I would. In all my life, my very Presence had engendered only Revulsion and Ridicule--Even some Atavistic Fear. "Senseless cruelty" indeed! What did any of Them know about Senselessness or Cruelty?
RATHER, WAXWROTH, SHOULD YOU SEE MORE. ONE FINAL... ILLUSTRATION ...
"I was infuriated! I wanted to shout and scream--to Rant and Rail!
"At Waxwroth, for his Supreme Arrogance! At Bitterburn, for his Moral Cowardice! At God Himself, for his Incomprehensibility and Harshness!
"But most especially at Lacknose... for his Self-Righteous Evocation of the Grandeur of Life! Forever withheld!
"I wanted him to suffer! I wanted them all to suffer as I had suffered!
"But Lacknose...
...just simply...
...died."

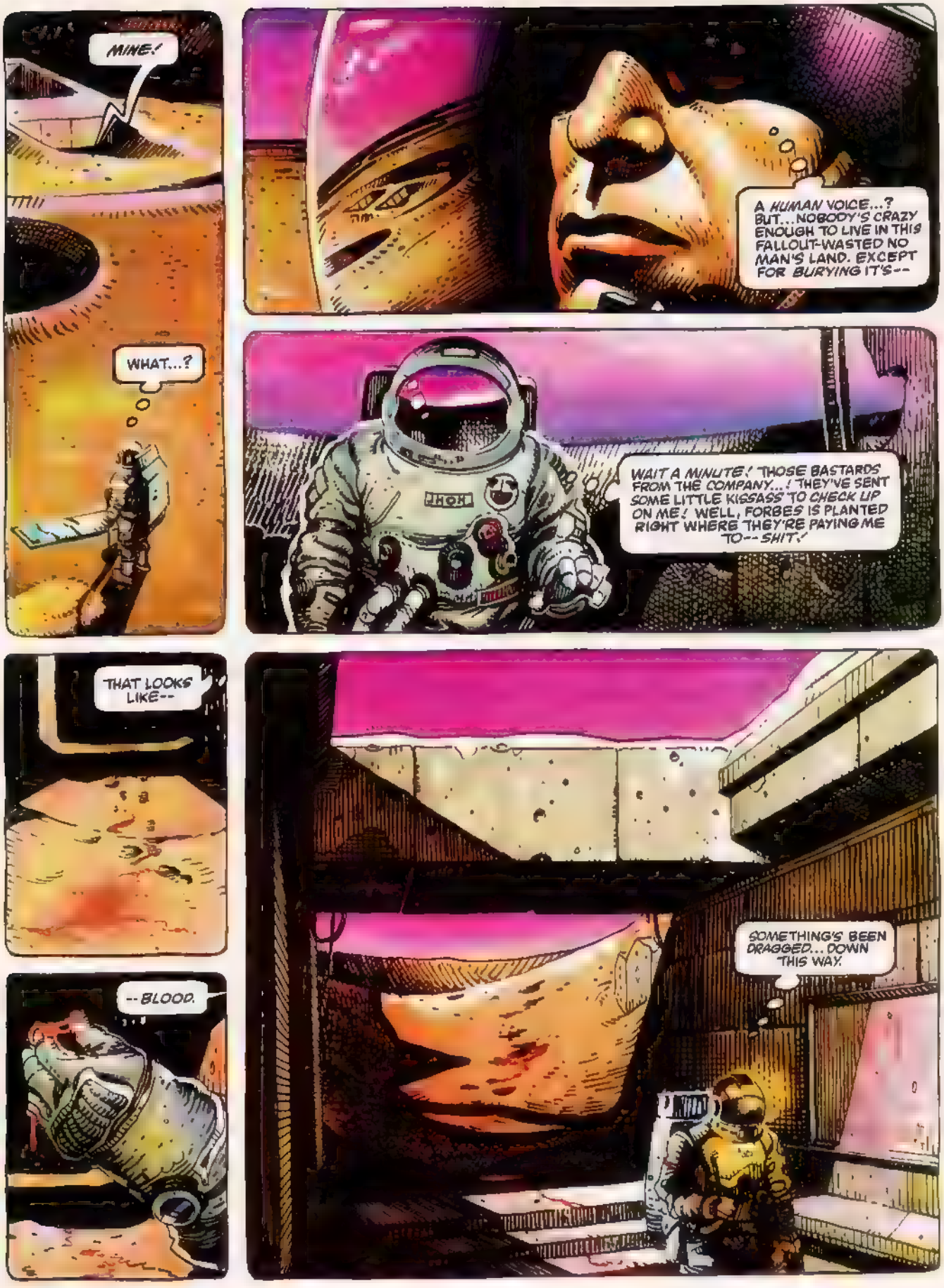
NO!
next:
ABYSS

THE FIX
ORBIT STABILIZED. THRUSTERS OFF
906
MORENO 80
POWER UP THE SHUTTLE AND WE'LL BE ABLE TO HEAD DOWNSTAIRS.
CHEER UP, FORBES. YOU'LL SOON BE SNUG IN THE SOIL OF MOTHER EARTH.
AND I'LL HAVE EARNED A THIRTY DAY TICKET TO EVERYTHING THE GALAXY'S BEST PLEASURE WORLDS HAVE TO OFFER.

© 1985 Pepe Moreno


OF COURSE, FORBES HERE WOULD NEVER APPROVE. HE WORKED HARD, SAVED EVERYTHING, AND DIED RICH. RICH... BUT HORNY. AND NOW HE FINALLY SPENDS IT--
--ON A FANCY FUNERAL SERVICE HE CAN'T SEE OR FEEL. MOST EXPENSIVE BURIAL OF THEM ALL... THE RETURN TO THE CRADLE OF MANKIND! WELL, FORBES--
-- WHEN I GET MY PAY FOR DELIVERING YOU, I'M GONNA WALLOW IN EVERY CREDIT'S WORTH.
AND THE SOONER YOU'RE PLANTED, THE SOONER THE WALLOWING BEGINS. LET'S SEE--
--41 SOUTHLINE. ASSHOLE WOULD WANT TO BE BURIED OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE. ALTHOUGH--


--ONE PART OF THIS ABANDONED DUSTBALL OF A PLANET IS PRETTY MUCH LIKE ANOTHER. EXCEPT TO SENTIMENTAL JERKS LIKE YOU, FORBES. DOPES WHO'VE ONLY HEARD OF CIVILIZATION'S HOME WITHOUT EVER SEEING WHAT AN ARMPIT IT'S BEC--


MINE!
WHAT...?
A HUMAN VOICE...? BUT...NOBODY'S CRAZY ENOUGH TO LIVE IN THIS FALLOUT-WASTED NO MAN'S LAND. EXCEPT FOR BURYING IT'S--
JHON
WAIT A MINUTE! THOSE BASTARDS FROM THE COMPANY...! THEY'VE SENT SOME LITTLE KISSASS TO CHECK UP ON ME! WELL, FORBES IS PLANTED RIGHT WHERE THEY'RE PAYING ME TO--SHIT!
THAT LOOKS LIKE--
--BLOOD.
SOMETHING'S BEEN DRAGGED... DOWN THIS WAY.

MINE MINE MINE MINEMINEMINEMINEMINEMINEMINEMINEMINE
THAT...THAT'S NOT HUMAN. CAN'T BE. SOME KIND OF ANIMAL...CREATURE. IT'S CALL JUST SOUNDS A LITTLE LIKE A REAL VOICE...!
SMAK
KRUNCH
KRIK
SKRIIIT
WHATEVER IT IS...I'M CATCHING IT AT FEEDING TI--
JHON
MINE! MINE! MINE!
CHRIST! W-WHAT... WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? THEY'VE ALWAYS SAID NOBODY WAS LEFT ON THIS--
OH, BUT THERE IS, STRANGER. HIM. AND US...AND THE DEAD.

THEY LEFT US, YOU KNOW. YOUR KIND, DIDN'T WANT TO TAKE MUTANTS OUT TO THE STARS...THEIR BRIGHT NEW COLONIES ..SHINY PLEASURE WORLDS...! LEFT US HERE TO DIE... TO BE FORGOTTEN.
BUT WE FOUND A WAY TO LIVE... ON THE DEAD.
LIKE I JUST.. SAW? LOOK, I CAN HELP YOU. JUST LET ME GET OUT OF HERE AND BACK HOME. I'LL EXPLAIN YOUR PROBLEM SO THEY CAN--
THEY CAN MAKE SURE NOTHING EVER COMES HERE AGAIN. NOT EVEN BURIAL SHIPS!
YOU'LL DO US MUCH MORE GOOD BY STAYING. WE CAN USE SOME... FRESH MEAT...
FRESH .. MEAT...?
DREAM ON, YOU MUTANT BASTARDS!
ZRAP!
I'M NOT HANGING AROUND FOR DINNER!
ZAT!
AIIEEE
HEAVY METAL

FOOD!
MINE!
MINE!
MAYBE THAT WILL KEEP THEM TOO BUSY TO COME AFTER ME.
JESUS! I'VE RUN ILLEGAL ARMS TO GAMMA FOUR--
--TRANSPORTED VOLUPTARIANS ACROSS INTERGALACTIC BOUNDARIES FOR IMMORAL PURPOSES--
--BUT THE FIRST TIME I GET A STRAIGHT JOB, I NEARLY GET EATEN!
SOON AS I'M BACK, I'M PICKING UP MY PAY AND TURNING IN MY FLIGHT CARD!
HOME! 'BRIGHT NEW COLONIES' WAS CORRECT, YOU MUTANT MONSTER! AND WHILE YOU'RE ALL ROTTING FOREVER ON OLD EARTH, I'M GOING TO BE LOST IN THE VERY BRIGHTEST--

--TAKING ADVANTAGE OF EVERY DELIGHT THE PLEASURE WORLDS HAVE ON THEIR MENU. AND MAYBE--
--INVENTING A FEW THEY HAVEN'T THOUGHT OF YET.
IT'S GOING TO BE LIKE A DREAM. BUT ONE WHERE I NEVER HAVE TO--
WAKE UP! SCAVENGERS ARE BACK. WITH A WHOLE TRAIN LOAD!
WE'LL NEED EVERYONE TO UNLOAD THE BODIES!
ENOUGH FOOD FOR WEEKS! COME ON! SOONER OR LATER YOUR DRUGS WILL RUN OUT AND YOU'LL HAVE TO FACE REALITY LIKE US ANYWAY!
REALITY?! LIVING ON THIS GRAVEYARD WORLD... EATING THE DEAD?! I CAN'T FACE THAT... I WON'T FACE THAT! JUST LEAVE ME! LEAVE ME ALONE!
MISERABLE CREEPS! GOT TO BLOCK 'EM OUT. CAME DOWN TOO QUICKLY FROM THAT LAST FIX. TIME TO START TAKING A HEAVIER HIT. YEAH...

Once upon a time...

A fairy tale for grown-ups

MOONSHADOW™

By J.M. DeMatteis & Jay Muth

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